

*ACHITOPHEL:*

OR THE

Wicked Politician.





# ACHITOPHEL:

OR, THE

## TRUE PICTURE

OF A

## Wicked Politician.

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2 Sam. 17. 23.

*And when Achitophel saw that his Coun-  
selw as not follow'd, he saddl'd his Ass and  
arose and gat him Home, and set his  
House in order, and hang'd himself, and  
was bury'd in the Sepulcher of his Fa-  
thers.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for J. Taylor at the Ship in St.  
Paul's Church-yard, and N. Cox at the  
Golden Bible without Temple-bar.  
1703.

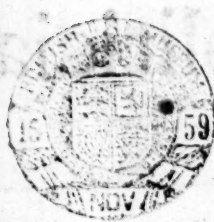
ACHTOPHEA

OR THE

TRUE PICTURE

OF A

Wicked Person



And when Achitophel saw, that his Counsel  
was not followed, he said to himself, I will  
now add to him Hymen, and he will  
Hymen to Hymen, and will be Hymen, and  
will be in the Splendor of his  
Ish.

Printed for J. Taylor at the Ship in St.  
Paul's Church-yard, and W. Dent in St.  
Golden Bible without Temple  
1703

To the  
Most Reverend Father in God,  
T H E  
Lord Archbishop of *Armagh*,  
A N D  
Primate of all *Ireland*.

*May it please your Grace,*

**T**O accept this sacred Tra-  
gedy, consisting of four  
chief Actors, namely *Da-*  
*vid* an anointed King; *Absolom* an

A 3

am-

ambitious Prince ; *Achitophel*, a wicked Politician ; and *Hushai* a Loyal Subject : whose several Parts are grounded on a Passage of History, for Variety pleasant, for Instruction useful, for Event admirable. If the Pen-man climb not the Height of such a Theme, yet I shall not, I hope, fall below the Measure of your gracious Acceptance, by which my Ambition will be abundantly satisfy'd ; in Confidence of it I rest your Grace's in all *Christian Duty* to be commanded.

T O



TO THE  
READER.

**I** Look on it as a Mark of the greatest  
Envy and Baseness to rob the Living  
and much more the Dead, of the  
Glory that is due to them. For which  
reason I thought my self bound to inform  
the Reader, if he knew it not before,  
that the chief Substance of this Tract,  
though the Name be not to it, is  
\* owing

owing to Dr. Nathaniel Carpenter, formerly a Fellow of Exeter College in Oxford : whom \* the Learned Bishop Prideaux, when Rector of that Society, number'd among the great Ornaments of it ; in whose Catalogue if, as I might, I inserted many others, yet should I find no one, at least of his Standing, that has ever been preferable to, if indeed to be compar'd with him.

Also even the † Oxford-Historian is here so good natur'd, as to allow him to have been, in the Judgment of all, an excellent Humanist and Divine ; tho he himself, when dying, modestly confess'd, that having spent his chief Time in Philosophy, Ma-

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\* In Epist. Dedicat. of a Sermon preach'd at the Consecration of St. James's Chappel in Exeter College.

† Athenæ Oxon. Fol. 40, &c.

thematically, &c. he had to his sorrow neglected Divinity.

How far Dr. Carpenter deserv'd these Characters, may be guess'd as well by the Esteem he met with from Arch-Bishop Usher, who taking notice of him at Oxford, pitch'd on him, without any special Recommendation, for his Domestick Chaplain, and continu'd him his Favorite till his Death; as also by the Treatises he wrote, which still speak in his Behalf: namely, *Philosophia libera triplici Exercitationum Decade proposita, &c.* Geography delineated forth in two Books, containing the Sphærical and Topical Parts thereof; An elaborate Treatise of Opticks, the perfect Copy of which was unhappily lost in the Irish Sea; Chorazin and Bethsaida's Woe and Warning-Piece; and the Tract I now publish: All which he brought forth as the Fruits of his youth-



youthful Labours; and how much more then might have been expected from him, had the learned World not lost so hopeful a Proficient at the Age of forty?

Of this I thought fit to advertise the Reader, lest I should be judg'd to have wrong'd Dr. Carpenter: tho at once I thought it not so proper to fix his Name on the Title; because indeed it is not entirely his own, it having receiv'd by my Hand some needful Alterations and Improvements of Matter, Method and Style, in order to adapt it to these present Times; tho these, and especially the latter, I cannot but say it to the Praise of Dr. Carpenter, were as little requisite in the Tract I now publish, as in any Thing I ever yet saw, dated at so great a distance off. For it was written at least four-score Years ago; which, considering the Exactness of his Periods, his choice of good



## To the Reader. xi

good Words and Neatness of Expression, ( for the most Part ) I could hardly have believ'd, had I not been otherwise undoubtedly assur'd of it.

I need add no more to prepossess the Reader in favour of this Tract: because it is but small, and what it deserves may soon be estimated from a Perusal of it. I only say this, that it contains an agreeable Variety of Matter, a pleasant Mixture of Wit and good Sense, of sacred as well as human Learning, tho without any shew or ostentation of either; and withal it is now cloth'd, I hope, in such a Dress as is not wholly unsutable to the Humour of this Age. So that in short, the Reader will here find a great deal to inform and direct his Judgment, and at once enough to entertain and please his Fancy. For this reason, among those many other Writings, which are daily rak'd out of the Dust, and in a new Mode

*Mode recommended to the World, I thought this of Dr. Carpenter would not be unacceptable; and thus do I excuse my Publication of it.*

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**A C H I**

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# ACHITOPHEL:

OR

*The True* PICTURE *of a*  
*wicked* POLITICIAN.

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PART I.

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**T**HE chiefest Objects, whereon  
Treason sets it self a work,  
are *Ambition* and *Discontent*;  
the former of which is wont to  
fashion the greatest Hopes out of the least  
Advantage, and the other seems like Tin-  
der to catch fire at the first touch, and  
turns the least Indignity into the greatest  
Indignation. This was well known to  
B that

that Grand *Politician Achitophel*, who finding *Absolom David's* Son affected with each Malady, determin'd to apprehend the least Opportunity to execute his own Malice, and *David's* ruin. *David* he a long time hated, as is probably conjectur'd by some, for the Murder of *Urias* his near Relation ; yet Subtlety and Secrecy, the two Handmaids of Human Policy, stood always betwixt his Hypocrisy and the King's Suspicion. *Absolom* he found in the Heat and Pride of his Youth, above measure ambitious of his Father's Sceptres, extremely discontent at his foul Disgrace and long Banishment : the one pointed out to him the way to Supremacy, the other to Revenge, easily perswading his erroneous Judgment, that it seem'd too small a Satisfaction for *Absolom* again to be entertained as a Subject, too great a Courtesy for *David* to live a King. Every Hour, which adds to the length of his Father's Reign, seems to borrow Years from the Thred of his expected Royalty, and Justice her self seems to claim a part in his Traitorous Ambition ; such is the Prerogative of self-bred Actions to shut out Prejudice, and promise to themselves as much Success as they find Excuse. Here Policy taught *Achitophel* to strike



strike while the Iron was hot, and join issue with the first Advantage. Time, the best Moderator of hasty Humours, might perhaps have smooth'd over *Abso- lom's* Guilt, or have slacken'd *David's* Indignation; and Occasions of this kind at first let slip, are afterwards rather wish'd than found. What he long plotted is now come to Execution, and his Expectation so long groaning with Ambition and Revenge, is at length wrack'd on the last Extremity. What his Policy in Proof deserv'd, it promis'd it self in Mens Opinions; and himself the first Projector he found entertain'd as chief Actor in this Conspiracy.

Nothing now seems wanting to the Project but an open Attempt to invade Applause; and Hostile Preparations must shew themselves in readiness, rather out of Formality than Opposition, as tho he had already won as much as Expectation, and Victory seem'd already legible in *Ab- solom's* gracious Presence, and the Peoples forward Acclamations. But those Consultations never speed well, where God is excluded the Council-Table; and Hope, which usually flatters the Ambitious with the best success, very often betrays 'em to the worst. *David* all this while

lies secure, as one who out of a paternal Ingenuity might sooner expect the hostile Invasion of a Foreign Enemy, than the secret Stratagems of so dear a Friend. For what indulgent Parent could fear his own overthrow to spring out of his own Bowels; or there to find the Ruin of himself, where he hop'd to erect the Trophy of his Name and Memory? But Treason at length knocking at his Doors, awakes his sleeping Jealousy; and time it is to fly to Foreign Succours, when he finds his own Sons and Subjects the Forgers of seditious Treason and unnatural Rebellion.

But that great Counsellor, who *turneth Human Wisdom into Folly*, and directs all Purposes to his own Ends, is not wanting to his Servant *David*, making earnest Intercession: *Hushai* is secretly suborn'd by *David*, under the pretence of Love and Service, as a suppos'd Friend, but disguis'd Enemy, to creep into *Absolom's* Bosom, and oppose *Achitophel*, that transcendent Politician. *Achitophel*, who as an Oracle of God had for his deep Wisdom hitherto pass'd current, is now shut out, and *Hushai*, this new Counsellor, is admitted Audience. Here begins the Dawning of *David's* happy Deliverance, and *Achitophel's*

*phel's* deserved Tragedy : for as the distemper of our first Concoction, as *Naturalists* observe, is seldom or never corrected in the second ; so the first Ground-work in *State-Policy*, ill laid or temper'd, can afterwards scarce promise a Reformation. But Princes Actions are commonly confin'd to no other Laws than their own Wills ; and in vain it is for *Achitophel* to give further Counsel, while he wants Persuasion. Despair and Indignation are at hand to second his Repulse, and nothing now seems left him for Refuge (so far as the Eye of his worldly Policy could discern) but the preventing of *David's* Officers in his shameless Execution. Accordingly, *when Achitophel saw that his Counsel was not follow'd, he saddl'd his Ass, and arose and gat him Home, and set his House in Order, and hanged himself, and was bury'd in the Sepulcher of his Fathers.* 2 Sam. 17.23. This Passage of sacred History is not a little entertaining, and affords the chief Hints to the following Discourses, as it contains an Account of *Achitophel's* last Actions and End, and naturally shoots into these two Branches : 1<sup>st</sup>, his Provocation ; 2<sup>dly</sup>, his Action. The Provocation was the neglect of his Counsel, express'd in the former Words ; And



*when Achitophel saw that his Counsel was not follow'd.* His Actions are decypher'd in the latter Clause, *he saddl'd his Ass and arose, &c.* In the Provocation or Motive we may observe these two Circumstances: First, what *Achitophel's* Counsel was, and wherein it consisted. Secondly, how and which way it was defeated.

To begin with the first; we may reduce his Policy to two Heads, as it consisted either in his apt Choice or wise Direction. The former was evident in that he took advantage of such a Subject to countenance *his* Rebellion, who among all the Children of *Israel* was likely to go the farthest. *Abolom's* Birth, Feature, Plausibility and high Spirit seem'd to speak him a King at first sight; as if Nature and Industry, Policy and Valour stood in competition which should challenge most in his Advancement. In the first place to examine his Birth, we shall find him a King's Son; and tho' the second of his Father's Race, yet the first in the Peoples Hope. Of the eldest little mention is left us, save the Name, as of one, by Impotence of Nature or disastrous Influence of the Stars, half cancel'd out of the Catalogue of *David's* Sons: and besides this, the Claim and  
 Title



Title to his Father's Kingdom, but newly begun, and not yet establish'd on Succession, gave no small Encouragement to *Absolom*'s high Ambition. For where Birth-right afforded no certain Challenge to Kingly Dignity, and the Father's Choice in designing out his Successor is scarce reputed warrantable, what other Obstacle, one would think, could stand betwixt him and Sovereignty, but only God's immediate Will or the Peoples Suffrage? The former, it seems, he little regarded, as one who either doubted of God's Providence, or appeared too confident of his Connivance; the latter, as a matter out of question, seem'd sooner found than fought; as if Opinion, which had so long fawn'd on his Worth, could as easily turn the Peoples Suffrage as command their Service. Yet had any Sense of Religion or Care of publick Good invaded the Minds either of young *Absolom* the Prince, or *Achitophel* the old Counsellor, they might first have enquir'd of some Prophet or other touching God's secret Purpose of depressing *David* and exalting *Absolom*; or at least have esteem'd Hereditary Succession the best Challenge. Well might God's Almighty Hand disdain Opposition, which never yet met Resistance;

and common Equity have stamp'd that current, which customary Right and the Law of Nature had already establish'd among most Nations. But their design is not grounded on God's Law or Nature's Privilege, but on their own seeming Advantage; as tho the Divine Counsel ought to stoop to Human Policy, and Nature to forsake the Scene, where worldly Wisdom comes in Action. Here is the first and chiefest Character of a worldly-wise Politician, who little cares how great a Rupture he makes thro the Laws of God and common Equity, so he may meet with his own Advantage, chusing rather to lose his Soul than his wicked Purpose; as one by Patent allow'd to dispense with any Obligation of Conscience and Religion. Hence may we easily discover the Error of Vulgar Judgments, who measuring inward Sufficiencys by outward Fortunes, repute those Men wisest who rise highest. Whereas true Wisdom, in whose Scale is weigh'd the Choice of the best Ends and fittest Means, has taught us rather to entertain than serve Preferments; and prize the quiet Calm of a settl'd Conscience before the stormy Gusts of ambitious Greatness. 'Tis not the want of Wit to project, but of Wickedness to practise, which keeps

Vertue poor, and Merit unregarded; neither are great Advancements the usual Badges of great Worth.

The second thing, of which *Achitophel* took advantage in *Absolom's* Person, was his fair and comely Feature. *Absolom* among all the Children of Men was reputed the fairest; his lovely Visage, dishevel'd Hair, the seemly Symmetry and Proportion of all his Parts, were as so many silent Orators to bespeak Applause, and perswade Affection. Our Friends or Foes we seldom owe to Choice, but Nature, which stamps in every Man's Face her special Characters of Beauty and Deformity, of Love and Hatred, ordaining 'em rather Commanders of Fancy than Servants to our Discretion. Whence *Aristotle* had good reason to make this comely Feature of the Body, one of the Complements of Human Happiness, as that which gives the Habit of our Virtues a more Glorious Lustre, and opens a speedier Passage to Heroick Actions. What greater Motive could have happen'd to a seditious Multitude, whose Affections being led rather by Sense than Reason, are better taught to fawn on Shews than Substance, and to swallow the most poisonous Drugs in gilded Pills? Nothing is more



more dangerous than painted Sin; and ugly Vice, couch'd under the Protection of a comely Countenance, will lose the Name and seem a Virtue: such is the bewitching Power of a beauteous Personage to enchant the wisest Judgment, that Persuasion is oftner found in the Orator than the Argument, as tho his Looks went as Harbingers before his Language, to prepare a Room and entertain Attention. Of these eminent Gifts of Nature notwithstanding, not granted to our free Choice, but rather trusted to our Husbandry, no question but Almighty God the Lender will expect an Interest. He that either hides his Talent in the Ground or mispends his Portion, shall find the reward of a faithless Servant; and much more such graceless Tenants, as turn their Endowments to the worst uses, and make God's munificent Gifts the Means and Ground-work of wicked and irreligious Actions. Where God sows, he expects his Harvest in the same Kind; and no Grain so mean in our estimation, out of which in proportion he do's not require a timely Crop. But where he finds our Industry slack in performing this Duty, or our Malice opposite to his Profit, he commonly works his own Ends out of our Ini-



Iniquitys; and what Parts and Endowments we abuse to Sin, he justly directs unto Revenge.

A third Advantage in *Abfolom's* Person suggested to *Achitophel's* Observation, was his fair Carriage and popular Plausibility. A sweet and courteous Deportment, season'd with Morality and Religion, never wants deserved Commendation, as the surest Character of an ingenuous Disposition, and the most powerful Servant of honest Policy. For as in our most religious Actions, we should study rather to profit than please our Auditors; yet he, who never affects to please, shall seldom have the Happiness to profit: so much more in Civil Affairs, the best Improvement is popular Estimation; and Vertue, tho never so eminent, shall scarce be reputed current, if not stamp'd by Applause, nor crown'd by common Approbation.

— *Non te quaesiveris extra*, seems rather an Axiom of a speculative and retir'd Stoick than of a practick Stateist. An upright Honest Man, I confess, would rather find himself at home in his own Conscience, than seek himself abroad in other Mens Opinions, as one whose first Care ought to be to form himself to God's Will and his own Content; his second,  
to

to husband his Means to mens Applause. Yet is this in no wise to disapprove of a kind and affable Behaviour, nor to countenance a Cynical and harsh Disposition. Had no other Affection than this possess'd the Soul of *Absolom*, or in him presented it self to *Achitophel*'s Observation, Discretion might have pleaded in the behalf of the former, and Honesty of the latter, and neither have wanted its deserved Commendation. The one might perhaps have been thought ambitious to inherit as well the Peoples Love, as his Father's Vertues ; the other to have applauded his Prince's Happiness in the Peoples Love. Nevertheless Popularity at the best is a Favour, which discreet and wise Subjects do sooner win than affect, it beginning usually with the Prince's Jealousy, and ending with the Owner's Ruin. The Defect of it might better become a Subject ; the Excess, a King : for which reason neither had the *Athenian Ostracisms* ever found place in Justice, had not popular Greatness threaten'd the State with Danger or Dissolution. How much more dangerous shall we esteem this Popularity of *Absolom*, springing from a rotten and corrupted Heart, and directed to a treacherous Conspiracy ?

Three special Stratagems were here put in Practice, which might well seem fashion'd in *Achitophel's* Forge: for the sending of *Absolom* for *Achitophel* to *Hebron* excludes not a former Consultation; neither is it probable he would so far have trusted him with his secret Counsels, had he not first found him inclining to his Faction. The first Engin of his seditious Purpose was his glossing and fine Complaisance both in Words and Gesture, by which he was said to *steal away the Hearts of the People from his Father David*. He usually stood in the Palace-Gate, observ'd the Approach of Suiters, examin'd their particular Grievances, enquir'd the Place of their Abode; in a word, he kiss'd and embrac'd 'em, saying, *O that I were made Judg in the Land, that I might hear every Mans Case, and do him Justice!* What zealous Subject, almost out of the seeming simplicity of his Words, would not swell with Expectation, and become as prodigal in his Hopes as the other in his Promises? The distance between Princes and private Men makes us often overvalue Courtesys; and the not discovering of such Mens Natures frequently occasions their worst Actions to carry the best Construction. But great Promises are commonly second-  
ed



ed by small or slow Performance; and an easy matter it is to be over-prodigal on the Score, where we never intend a Payment. To boast of our Actions and Sufficiencies, was never thought a *Solacism* in the juggling Art of Human Policy: But admit that *Absolom* in this Case had promis'd to himself as much as the People, and suffer'd his Confidence to spread her Wings beyond his Abilitys, yet is this of little service to excuse his Action from unnatural Disobedience or masked Treachery. It was the part of a shameless *Cham* to be an industrious Spectator of his Father's Nakedness; of a railing *Rabshekeh* or cursing *Shimei*, to divorce him from his Subjects Hearts. Nature would have perswaded a gracious Child with *Noah's* two modest Sons to have look'd awry or gone backward; no sooner to have seen than he could hide his Father's Shame. Allegiance might have instructed a Loyal Subject to prize his Sovereign's Credit before his own, and drown his greatest Honours in his Prince's Service. But setting aside these near and high Relations of a Son to his Father, or a Subject to his Prince; the Division and Divorce of *Friends* even among *Heathens*, has always seem'd to a generous Temper a wicked Revenge  
of



of base Ambition. Honour seldom bestows her Favours but on such as win 'em in open Field ; and Heroick Spirits have always chosen rather dearly to buy, than basely to steal a Victory. To steal away the Hearts of our Friends, favours more of a fleering Parasite, than a wise Politician ; and to seek secret Ambushes in case of open Trial, argues rather the weakness of our Cause, than the strength of our Discretion. Nevertheless this seem'd a good Ground for *Absolom* to set, and *Achitophel* to work on ; and little can true Wisdom or Religion perswade in the Rear, where wicked Policy commands the Vant-Guard.

A second Stratagem put in practice by *Absolom*, and perhaps plotted by *Achitophel*, to augment his own Plausibility, was publicly to slander his Father's Government with the odious Charge of Injustice and Oppression. The same Art, which taught him to flatter his Inferiors, shew'd him the way to calumniate his Superiors ; so nearly are these two opposite Vices knit together in a wicked Cause. See, said *Absolom*, after examination of each Suiter, *thy Case is just and good, but there is no Man deputed of the King to hear thee.*

Da-

*David* now began to decline as well in Strength as Government. Age and Disease most commonly grow together ; and where the Master begins once to droop, the Servants prove either carelessly negligent or lawlessly insolent. These Inconveniencys perhaps admitted by *David's* Officers, and observ'd by *Absolom*, render'd him obvious to exception. The greatest Places are commonly subject to the greatest Censures ; but when Almighty God was not wanting to *David*, I can't imagin *David* to be much wanting to his People : and tho Strength and Valour, the Darlings of his Youth, began to faint in him ; yet Wisdom and Experience, the Children of his riper Age, step'd in to undertake his Quarrel. No otherwise then can we interpret this Exception of *Absolom* against his Father ; than that it was a malicious Slander, devis'd for no other end, but to make him odious and himself acceptable ; which he by so much the more hop'd easy to effect, by how much more he saw the giddy Multitude, (as at all other times, so especially in this declining Age of *David*) as desirous of Novelty, as subject to Discontent. The best Governors seldom please long, and the worst may for a while. Worth

is

is seldom so eminent as in the Absence; and the best Magistrates, like the Images of *Brutus* and *Cassius*, as *Tacitus* relates, seem then most glorious, when they are most wanting. Envy and Detraction, like two venomous Serpents, do always lurk in the Path of Justice, and the best Rulers do seldom find the freest Passage. He that goes about to persuade a Multitude, that they are not so well govern'd as they ought to be, will sooner want Argument than Attention. The reason of which, as a Learned Man has observ'd, is, because the Abuses and Corruptions in every State most inevitable, are for the most part sensible to vulgar Capacitys: whereas the Hindrances of Reformation are apparent only to Men of experienc'd Judgments. As easy was it here for *Ab-salom* to slander as to speak. His Eyes could no sooner open, but spy some Object or other to animate his own Projects and the Peoples Discontent. Of such Force is the boundless Malice of base Informers, with the Venom of their Aspick Tongues, to poison our sincerest Actions, and present as in a Perspective the least Mites and Molehills of our Imperfections, like huge and mighty Mountains. This King *David* found in the midst of a calm and settl'd

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State,



State, when Mischief had scarce yet known her own Strength, nor Time as yet teem'd with all the Engins of graceless Villany. What then may we now expect in these Dog-days of the World's declining Age, in which malicious Detraction is esteem'd the Quintessence of Wit, and ingenuous Acknowledgment of Mens Deserts is esteem'd too great a Favour? Surely the best Revenge I can here invent for Innocence, are *Preces & Lachrymæ*, the *Christian's* Armour ; and the constant Resolution of the sweet *Psalmist*, *I will pray yet against their Wickedness*.

The third and greatest Imposture which *Absolom* practis'd to make himself acceptable, was the pretence of Religion; The keeping of a Vow, he pretended at least to have made, of his return to *Hebron*, and there to praise God, after his safe Return to *Jerusalem*. *David* is solicited to consent to his Journey ; nor could such a Petition brook a denial, which comes usher'd in under the shew of a Religious Office. *Hebron* seem'd to *David* a place for Sacrifice ; to *Absolom*, for Conspiracy. *Jerusalem* was too near his Father's sight, or rather too far from his Treacherous Purpose, to admit of such a wicked Convention. The meeting



ing of such Conspirators so near the Court, might soon have open'd the Eyes of sleeping Jealousy, and betray'd the Treason to Discovery. *David's* Countenance might perhaps have daunted the Courage of *Absolom's* Friends, or have won their Love; and lest the Peoples Affection to *Absolom* should grow cold in his Absence, he leaves behind him his Parasites to solicit his Cause, and at his approach to give the Signal. Moreover, to strengthen himself the better against publick Hostility, or private Mistakes, he carrys with him a Garison from *Jerusalem* to defend his Person, and sends for *Achitophel* to *Hebron*, to direct his Counsel. Nothing else but a pretence to Religion could be thought a Vizard to hide the Face of this dangerous Conspiracy from the sight of suspicion. Deceit never thrives better than when she least seems her self; and Vice seldom dares to shew her self in publick, unless she steal the Robes of Vertue, and actuate her self with fly Hypocrisy. *Satan* transforms himself into an Angel of Light, when he intends the greatest Mischief, and instructs his Disciples in the like Policy. This has been the Devil's Shift and Practice in all Ages; nor do's Wick- edness ever come better arm'd, than with a

shew of seeming Sanctity. *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, who made *Israel* to sin, had no other Pretence than Religion, to withdraw the Ten Tribes from *Jerusalem*, by setting up a new Idolatry. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in the New Testament, who, under colour of Fasting and long Prayer, devour'd Widows Houses, profess'd the most rigid and strict Obedience of the Law. Among the three Sects in *Jerusalem* in the Time of the Siege by *Vespasian* and *Titus*, *Josephus* observ'd those to have been the most notoriously wicked, who term'd themselves the *Zealous*. But alas, *Pandora's* Box was not yet empty; the most of Evils were reserv'd to these last and worst Times, in which the greatest Sins are counted *Articles of Faith*, and sincere Profession is stil'd *Heresy*. *Ignatius* had not yet sent his Brood into the World with the *Pope's* Patent, as so many Factors to sell Damnation; nor had the *Tridentine* Council concluded that Idolatry and Superstition should pass for true Religion. But since the Approach of this *Medusa's* Head, the World seems to have suffer'd a fatal *Metamorphosis*, and wonders to find her self so gross a Changeling. Had I room in this place to make a Survey of the *Roman Church*,

I should soon discover their whole Religion to be little other than a Politick Hypocrisy, entirely directed to Gain and Greatness; pretending nothing but Piety and Goodness, and practising little else than Malice or Profaneness. What Vulgar Judgment can otherwise interpret their Pedlers-Pack of *Indulgences*, and sundry other Superstitious Jugglings, than that it is a meer Merchandize of Souls, in which every graceless Parricide, as in a common Market, may at the hands of a Mercenary Priest cheapen and buy his own Salvation? Had all the *Achitophel's* or *Absolom's* in the World lost their Politick Inventions, they might I think find 'em again improv'd in this *State-Religion*. No Disunion of the Church so small, which their rigorous Constitutions pronounce not *Heresy*; no Sin so hainous for which their *Pope* dares not grant a Dispensation: as tho Sanctity consisted not in the inward Disposition of the Man, but in the outward Conformity to the Church, and Piety was pinn'd on the Sleeve of worldly *Policy*. This politick Sin of *Hypocrisy* I no sooner lose among the *Romanists*, but I find it again among too many of our Home-bred *Schismaticks*, nay I may add of our *Church-Fanaticks*, a sort of People



as inconsistent with themselves in real Opinion and outward Practice, as the compound Name I give them seems contradictory; who under the Mask of Christian Love and *Moderation* do more dangerously threaten the Constitutions of our Church, and by consequence the State, than even her declar'd and open Opposers: while professing themselves true Members of her, gravely partaking of her Mysterys, and slyly insinuating into her Bowels, they design. I'm perswaded, whenever they can to bite and to betray her; to overturn her Discipline, pervert her Ordinances, and at length translate the Ministerial Office to a kind of *Andabates*, who never assail her but with their Eyes shut, and who, in a word, have for the most part but little Learning, and much less Religion than the Simple imagin to be quoted in their Looks, or appears in their outward Pretensions.

— *Satis est vidisse, revertor.*

The fourth and last Advantage, observ'd by *Achitophel* in *Absolom's* Disposition, was his stout Courage and manly Resolution. What greater Argument of Valour, than to rouse a Lion into open Chase,

Chase,



Chafe, and promise himself a Passage to Victory thro the Jaws of Danger, and Deposition of a Lawful King? *David's* fortunate Success he might well have read in *Goliath's* Overthrow, and the Yoke imposed on the furious *Philistines*. Time as yet had not raz'd the Trophys of his Triumphant Youth, nor had Age yet cancel'd from his Countenance the Characters of his undaunted Courage. The Subversion of a stately Kingdom was never yet esteem'd an easy Conquest; and Sovereignty seems a Center, unto which Providence has chalk'd out the Lines of few Mens Ambition. 'Tis more than one *Hesperian* Dragon of Difficulty and Danger, that is set to guard this *Golden-Tree*; and what Combat can be expected but from such a Captain, whose least Fear is in his greatest Danger? However *Absolom* engag'd by *Achitophel's* Advice, undertakes the Combat. *Absolom's* stout Heart gives sudden Fire to his Ambition, and *Achitophel's* Counsel stands in readiness to back and strengthen his ambitious Courage; the one is at hand to act, the other to project the means of his Advancement. Strength and Policy, which seldom shake Hands, are here reconcil'd, or at least for a Time they'll entertain a Truce. *Achitophel* be-

ing confident enough of his Counsel, requir'd no fitter Instrument to actuate his Malice than *Abfolom's* Courageous Resolution, knowing right well that nothing could prove more prejudicial to a State than *armed Madnefs*. This is no small part of worldly Policy, to stand aloof, and give aim to wicked Purposes; and to abuse the hasty Humours of hot Spirits to their own advantage. This is very observable in our modern *Machiavillians*, who have deliver'd this Precept as a Principle: *Make no difference between an evil Servant and a good; but use 'em both to thy own Ends.* *Catiline* thirsting for nothing more than the Ruin of his Country, and an Expiation of the Disgrace he receiv'd from the *Senate*, could make use as well of the Pride of *Lentulus*, as the Rashness of *Cethegus*: the high Blood of the one and the fiery Spirit of the other serv'd him to good Purpose; the one to countenance, the other to animate his wicked Action. Thus also the *Persian* Nobility, as we read in *Xenophon*, enrag'd against *Artaxerxes* their King, sought occasion to side with the Valour of the *Grecians*, and to stir up the high Spirit of *Cyrus* the younger Brother to revenge himself against the elder. The fairest Colours are subject to the

the deepest Stains, and the most free and eminent Dispositions are commonly obvious to the greatest Alterations, and suffer themselves to be soonest poison'd, if once tempted with Vain-glory or Discontent. No wonder then, if the Sons of *Achitophel* surviving in our Times, being instructed by their Fathers Counsel, take advantage to work their own Ends out of other Mens discontented Passion. If a search were made, some I fear would be found among us, as far transcending *Achitophel* in Malice, as indeed they come short of him in Wit and Policy; who endeavour to fasten upon their Associates the Badg of their own virulent Disposition, for which perhaps, besides the Glory of their own Shame, they cannot with *Achitophel* so much as pretend a Cause or devise an End. But such Men will surely answer as well for their own Seducements, as for other Mens Transgressions; nor shall our Faults herein be reputed less, than the Interest we challenge in our Brothers Friendship. It is the Part of the foulest Spider, out of the fairest Flowers to suck Poison; of industrious Bees, out of stinking Hemlock to gather Hony: And they, that would resemble the latter and not the former, should rather labour  
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to improve the worst Humours to good Temper, than pervert the best unto ungodly Actions. The former is to follow God's own Example, who directs and disposes wicked Mens Actions to his own good Purposes ; the latter is to follow the Devil's, who takes occasion out of the most Innocent, the most Sacred Things, to work Mischief.

Thus far have we beheld *Achitophel* as in his private Study, designing out a fit Subject and Occasion to be reveng'd on *David*. We are now to observe him sitting in Council, and instructing *Absolom*. The Advice he gave is twofold : the first subordinate and preparatory to strengthen the Faction ; the second, last and principal, to execute the Action, and secure the Success. In the former he counsels *Absolom* to go in and abuse his Father's Concubines : *Go in*, said he, *to thy Father's Concubines, whom he has left to keep the House ; and when all Israel shall hear that thou art abhor'd of thy Father, the Hands of all that are with thee shall be strong.* In which Counsel we may observe a double Prospect ; First, in securing his own and his Friends Estate ; Secondly, in uniting the People more firmly to *Absolom's* Obedience : nor in this did he  
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step besides his Policy. He serv'd himself first, and his Master no otherwise than for himself; and thought that Counsel lost as ill-bestow'd on *Absolom*, in which he could not promise himself either Safety or Advancement. He thought it ill-siding with a doubtful or an inconstant Friend. *Absolom*, however professedly he had engag'd himself to Treason, might deceive his Opinion or fail his Expectation. His pretended Discontent towards his Father might, for ought he knew, be only personated, to make tryal of the Subjects Allegiance, or his Resolution inconstant, to betray them to Danger. *Absolom*, tho a Traytor, was yet a Son; *David*, tho provok'd, was yet a Father. No *Gordian* Knot was ever so cunningly knit by Policy, which Nature cannot cut or Time dissolve. The Privilege of Youth or Prerogative of a Son may make this Action seem rather a Scape than a Sin. His Faults however great will seem rather *Achitophel's* than his own; and that which Justice in others will term Reason, Indulgence in him will interpret Weakness. *David* may remit, and *Absolom* reconcile, what the one suffer'd and the other acted; and then must *Achitophel* and his Accomplices either stand

stand at Stake to maintain their Master's Action, or hazard their Lives on the brittle Confidence of the King's Mercy. The Breach of a Son's Disloyalty may perhaps be piec'd up with filial Submission : whereas *Achitophel's* Revolt seems to expect no other Issue but Death or Victory. The middle way in *Policy* is always rejected as dangerous ; and the Extreme requires the most desperate and extreme Attempts. *Achitophel* is not here wanting to himself : *Absolom* must yet be engag'd to a more notorious Action, uncapable of Forgiveness, in which all *Israel* may read his absolute Revolt, and his Father's greatest Indignation. *Absolom* must be known neither to regard nor hope for his Father's Reconcilement. *David's* Anger must be thought inexorable, as that which Justice requires, and the Honour of a King commands. If *Absolom* then hopes to wed the Throne of *Israel*, he must first violate his Father's Bed : and to this his notorious Act of Treason let him further add the Sin of Incest. Petty Crimes are the Effects of Inferiour Offenders : *Absolom* must be thought as great as himself, as one who would play the King as well in his Sins as his Ambition. Nor can this Wickedness be safe or shameful enough, if secret.

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Secrecy, which in other Matters commonly proves the Mother of Security, is here reputed the Nurse of Danger; and Guilt, which usually shuns the Light, is here desirous of Discovery. To sin closely argues either Fear or Modesty; neither of which can protect a Rebel, or become a King. *Set up a Tent, said Achitophel, on the House-Top, that all Israel may witness thy Sin, and thy Father's shame;* and make the World at once both blush and wonder. Let thy Brother *Ammon* sin in a Corner to decline Censure; sin Thou in Publick, to strike Censure speechless, and outface the severest Frowns of Justice. Let *Ammon* commit Incest with his Sister; go Thou in unto thy Father's Concubines: what was the Weakness of Lust in him, ought to be the Strength of thy aspiring Greatness. Thy greatest Safety consists in thy greatest Villany; and the least blush seems to betray thy Cause to Diffidence and Danger. Let *Reuben* trespass with one of his Father's Wives; go Thou unto ten of thy Father's Concubines, that this thy Fact may at once surmount both Example and Imitation. Then *the Hands of all that are with thee shall be strong*: they shall speed no worse than *Abolom*, and therefore ought to fear

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no more. To fall with our Captain seems the least Duty; to rise with him, the greatest Honour: and who but a Coward would fear to hazard the Life of a Subject to make a King? Great Dangers and great Honours begin and end in the same Circle; nor is the Path strow'd with Violets and Roses, but Death and Slaughter lead the Tents of Victory. This was *Achitophel's* first Counsel, as dangerous to be declined, as desperate to be executed. But desperate and extreme Purposes are engag'd to the like Means; and sincere Honesty in the Course of Policy, where she finds not her self admitted as the chief Mistress, will seldom prove a trusty Servant.

Upon this Counsel of *Achitophel*, plotted by himself and acted by *Absolom*, I cannot but make these two Remarks: First, the fulfilling of God's Judgment and *Nathan's* Prophecy, threaten'd before to *David* for his sinning with *Bathsheba*, and *Uriah's* Murder; For behold, says God by the Mouth of *Nathan*, *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own House, and will take thy Wives before thine Eyes, and will give them unto thy Neighbour; and he shall lie with thy Wives in the sight of the Sun: for Thou didst it secretly, but I will do this Thing*

*Thing before all Israel, and before the Sun.*  
Such is the Wisdom of Almighty God, which can work his Good out of our Wickedness, and make our unjustest Actions the instrumental Examples of his own Justice. Our very Sins, tho false Traytors to the Owners, prove trusty Executioners of the Divine Judgments; and an easy matter it is for the wise Disposer of all worldly Actions, to turn Man's greatest Shame into his greatest Glory. Secondly, I remark it to be a Maxim in worldly Policy, *that a Sin can seldom secure it self but by an Addition of greater.* Where the House is swept and garnish'd, and one Devil is too little to enter, seven Devils greater than himself are press'd to give a fresh Assault: since there is no way left for Sin to propagate its Power, but Sin; nor can Truth be ever intreated to adventure her self as a Pledge for Falshood, or stake her Credit for a profess'd Enemy. Religious Providence and worldly Policy may, I confess, sometimes run together, but seldom shake Hands. The Path of the former we find always to be one and like it self, but that of the latter to be crooked and various, and engag'd to many Difficulties; if ever they chance to meet, it is but as in a Point, and so they soon  
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part. So that the further we run in this Maze of worldly Policy, the further we estrange our selves from Piety ; and the Distance, which at first seem'd below the Senses, will at length be found above the Understanding. Every ponderous Substance, as Naturalists observe, the more it descends, the faster is the Motion : and thus is there no Moment of Space or Time, wherein we traverse the Way of Wickedness, which adds not some Weight to the massy Burden of our Original Impiety, and hastens not our Passage to Perdition. One Sin tries to secure it self by many, and smaller Crimes find no safe Protection but in the shelter of greater. Treason and Usurpation cannot support themselves but by the Sword of Tyranny ; Malice invokes Revenge to help her, assisted with her Servants Murder and Detraction : Ingratitude will soon break into open Defiance, and the Neglect of God's Precepts is commonly seconded with Contempt ; at least when all others withdraw their Forces, Impudence and Hypocrisy are sworn to back their quarrel : the former of which can outface the severest Censure ; the latter can blind the Eyes of the strictest Inquisition. How can we but here observe

serve the great Distance between Christian and Worldly Policy. The one counsels us to make up the Breach of our Sins by a sincere Repentance; the other, to enlarge it with greater Villany. *Bind not two Sins together, for in one thou shalt not escape unpunish'd*, says the wisest of Kings. But these Politicians holding themselves to be wiser than the wisest, esteem Repentance base, and Perseverance in Sin generous. Nobler they suppose it to venture on with Danger, than retire back with Shame; as if they meant to shew themselves industriously resolute to sell their part in Heaven, and purchase their own Damnation. But these we must leave a while to their own Resolutions; it may be we shall find 'em again with *Achitophel*, hanging on the Gallows: whose second and last Counsel offers it self next to our Examination.

Hitherto has it been *Achitophel's* Care to strengthen the Faction; both to secure himself, and unite the Hearts of *Israel* more firmly to *Absolom* their Leader. His second Direction concerns the speeding of the Execution: *Let me now*, said *Achitophel*, *chuse out twelve thousand Men; and I will arise and pursue after David this Night, and I will come upon him while he is weary*

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*and weak-handed, and make him afraid ; and all the People which are with him shall fly : and I will smite the King only, and I will bring back all the People unto thee ; the Man, whom thou seekest, is as if all return'd : so all the People shall be at Peace.* In which politick Advice three remarkable Circumstances offer themselves to our Consideration : First, it was *Achitophel's* Desire as well to have his Head in the Conspiracy, as his Hand in the Execution ; perhaps because he hated *David*, he was ambitious to shew himself the Executioner of his own Revenge and *David's* Ruin ; perhaps he did it out of Vain-glory, that he might seem as able to act, as wise to project a Mischief ; perhaps out of an officious Flattery, to engage *Absolom's* Thankfulness by a double Service. But that which seems to me most probable, was his extreme Jealousy, not daring to trust so Young an Experience with a Matter of so great moment. *Absolom's* Youth seem'd, it may be, too shallow to entertain the Depth of his Directions ; his Blood too near to outface the Frowns of a Father's Anger ; or the Awe of filial Duty could not be suppos'd a fit Actor in *David's* Tragedy. The hardest Iron at the first Touch of the Load-stone is reduc'd to  
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its first Temper, and conceives a *Magnetic* Inclination: and why might not *David*'s fiery Assault or gracious Countenance, enforce Nature to return unto herself, and kindle in *Rebellious Absalom* the Sparks of filial Duty and Obedience? Here may a Man read the State and Condition of wicked Policy, as expos'd to a thousand Dangers, and subject to a thousand Jealousys. Tho such Men as *Damocles* at the Table of *Dionysius* may feed their Hopes with the choicest Dainties; yet God's fearful Judgments, as a Sword pendulous over their Heads, is always ready to threaten a Destruction. Wherefore 'tis not a good but an evil Conscience that makes Men Cowards. Only he who wants Guilt, wants Fear; and nothing but a clear Conscience can challenge true Mother-hood in a courageous Resolution.

The second Point we observe in *Achitophel*'s Counsel, was a Stratagem of *Diversion*. His Quarrel was not against the People but *David*; accordingly he purpos'd to preserve the Kingdom, but destroy the King; and therefore thought it not so meet to hew out his Passage to *David*'s Overthrow thro the Blood of the Subjects, as by the King's Forfeit to purchase

chase them to *Absolom's* Obedience. His first Care was to strike at the Root it it self, well knowing that the Branches would fall of their own accord ; and the Peoples Allegiance once dead in *David*, would soon quicken again in *Absolom*. The Strength of *Israel* is shut up in the Prince's Palace, and the same Power which Conquers the one is soon Master of the other. This Counsel seems to partake as well of good as bad. With the Death of one to redeem the Lives of many, in the rigorous Laws of Hostility, seems not a Duty, but a great Courtesy: but to sell a King to buy a Kingdom, and stake one *Prince* for many Subjects, is less than Courtesy, and more than Cruelty. Nor was this Course effected by *Achitophel* to spare the Lives of Innocents, or avoid a greater Mischief ; but that he found it an easier way to conquer *David* and reduce the People to *Absolom's* Jurisdiction. The Good which Politicians use to pretend, commonly swells in Shew, but shrinks in Substance. As the Ocean they would seem to flow in their kindnesses, and embrace us with twyning Arms, as the Waves do the *Continent* : but seeking to lay hold on 'em, we commonly find 'em to ebb into nothing,

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thing, and snatch back their own with some Advantage. If they chance to be Authors of any Good, it only serves to flatter Opinion and deceive Simplicity; not that they love Good, but that they may be the better arm'd to work Mischief. To commit Evil for a good End, seems to bear a better Pretence before Men, than Excuse before God; but to suffer or act some Good for an evil End, is the Height of Man's Wickedness, and the Devil's Institution.

The third and last Circumstance in *Architophel's* Counsel, was by a sudden and unexpected Assault to take the best advantage of his own Strength and *David's* Weakness. *I will, said he, suddenly fall on David, while he is weary and weak-handed; and the People shall fly.* To join with Mens Misfortunes and add to Misery, shews rather the Baseness of the Man, than the Confidence of the Cause; and to second God's Afflictions with our own Revenge, is a Mark of God's Instrument, but the Devil's Servant. The Apprehension of a fit Opportunity is of it self, I own, a matter indifferent as well to good as wicked Policy: yet hasty and unexpected Actions do commonly carry with 'em a greater suspicion of Guilt, than Discretion, as that which seeks to prevent a Tryal, and



fears Discovery. Time, the Father of Truth, would doubtless have betray'd *Absalom's* Cause to open Examination, and reduc'd the discontented *Commons* to their first Temper. *David* might have given Satisfaction, and Allegiance have reviv'd in his Subjects Hearts. Necessity, which perhaps begot the Effects of ill Government, might have urg'd the Causes; and Reason, which at first seem'd to fawn on their Discontent, might afterwards be taught to correct her Errors, and suppress their Insolence. All this *Achitophel* knew right well, and therefore chose rather to take advantage of the Peoples sudden Passion, than their maturer Judgment; as one, who had good cause to shun a Legal Jury, where he could expect no other than Loss in the final Verdict.

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# ACHITOPHEL:

OR

*The True PICTURE of a  
wicked POLITICIAN.*

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PART II.

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**C**OMMON Censure has stamp'd it for a current Proverb, that *it is better for a Man to be fortunate than wise.* For worldly Wisdom, tho she seem always to fawn on *Fortune*, yet can never command and but seldom intreat her Service. It has been the Pride and Privilege of that Power, which we term *Fortune*, to bestow her best Favours where she finds least Worth, to crown Folly and cross Wisdom, to make Fools happy and the Wise unhappy. Like a Queen she is suppos'd to shew her

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greatest Majesty in Man's Weakness, to pity Sloth and envy Industry; as being most jealous lest human Wit or Endeavors should challenge any part in her Prerogative. But he that knows wisely to arbitrate betwixt the Clouds of *Pagan* Ignorance and the clear Sun-shine of Christianity; betwixt *Poetick* Fancys, and *Prophetick* Visions, will find Vulgar Opinion mistaken in the Name, ascribing that transcendent Power of disposing worldly Actions to a Deity which they call *Fortune*, but which Christian Knowledge might have taught 'em more properly to term *Providence*. And however they have extended her large Empire beyond their own Reason; Christianity has travel'd much further, and yet can set no Limits to her, as that which transcends into an Infinite, and outreaches the Eye of all Discovery. And tho' no place can be found so low in the Theatre of Nature or civil Actions, in which Providence cannot shew the abundant Trophys of her Magnificence; yet there dos she desire to triumph most, where to Men she seems to have least Power. Her chief Glory is to set up her Ensigns on the Gates of Man's Pride, and tread on the Neck of worldly Policy. No wonder then that in  
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the great Politician *Achitophel*, in whom Loyalty could neither command Restraint, nor perswade Duty; whom neither undoubted Valour could check, nor Danger terrify; only *Providence* could challenge the Jurisdiction. His Politick Observation of *Absolom*'s Disposition and rare Endowments, designing him out as a fit Subject for his Treason, seconded, as I have before hinted, by his crafty and irreligious Counsel to abuse *David*'s Concubines, had hitherto pass'd current, and found in Event, as much as it promis'd in Expectation. *Absolom* had hitherto express'd himself no worse a Learner, than he a Teacher. Infomuch that the World might well doubt, whether the one were more happy to project or the other to put in Execution. Nothing now seems remaining behind, but to strike the last Stroke, and give the fatal On-set. *David*'s Overthrow and *Absolom*'s Advancement appear together in Sight; and his long and tedious Ambition, as it were within a League, arriv'd at the Port of Victory: so that if *Absolom* play not the Truant in his last Lesson, within a few Hours the Voice of *Israel* must needs salute him King. But the Change of a good Master oftentimes makes a non-proficient

ficient Scholar : *Achitophel's* Precepts must be corrected by *Hushai*, his second Tutor. Two Eyes are presum'd to discern more than one ; and the rugged and uneven Knots in our first Invention, ought to be fil'd by the second. Tho *Achitophel* in Counsel be a Politician, yet *Absolom* in Ambition is a King, and therefore may arrogate to himself as well the Honour of the Conquest, as of the Scepters. Too much it might seem for *Achitophel* to have both ; too little for *Absolom* to have no Hand at all in this Kingly Project. If *Absolom* dare not trust his own Advice, yet let him shew his Liberty of Consent. Wisdom consists as much in Choice as in Invention ; nor dos it seem the least part of *Absolom's* Prerogative, amidst divers Counsellors, to declare himself a King. *Achitophel* shall be suffer'd to speak his Mind as an Assistant, but not determine Causes as a Judg ; and therefore must pardon *Absolom*, if approving him in all other Points he in this one dissent. But oftentimes he, who can best act, can worst pen down his own Part : and therefore no wonder, if *Absolom* usurping the Office of *Achitophel*, began to fail in his last Act. But to leave *Absolom* to his headstrong Will, we must here search more nearly  
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into the Neglect of *Achitophel's* Counsel, particularly touching the Causes of it, and their concomitant Circumstances. The Causes preceding the Fact we may observe to be either primary or secondary: the primary we find to be no other, than Almighty God, from whom all other Inferiour Agents derive their Strength and Action. Where Nature begins and Reason ends, there must we place that Omnipotent and Eternal Power, as the Center from which all Operations do first spring, and the boundless Circumference into which all Discourses run. Betwixt his Eternal and Inferior Agents, as the Distance knows no Proportion, so could Reason never find Resistance or Opposition; and easy was it for that Omnipotent Providence, to which *Achitophel's* Counsels were from all Eternity discover'd, to decree as well the Means as the End of his Defeat. For as in the vast Frame of Nature, Bodys compar'd one with the other, seem Heterogeneal, as consisting of divers and opposite Operations; yet as so many Wheels in an artificial Engin are by the same Hand directed to the same common Use, so the Actions and Counsels of Men, howsoever casually they may seem to meet, and juggle one the  
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the other, yet are preordain'd by the same infinite Counsel to co-operate to the same universal End. Whence there naturally rises this Observation : That *howsoever Men may propose to themselves, it is only in the Power of Almighty God to dispose.* A Proposition better known as a Proverb among Men, than acknowledg'd in their Practice. Yet had the great Politicians of this World as much *Logick* to judge, as *Cunning* to contrive their own Plots ; they would certainly out of the Combination of second Causes, without any reference to the first, rather suspect a Fallacy than promise a Demonstration. Had they as much Acquaintance with God's Word, as their own wicked and profane *Axioms*, they would have heard the Lord often threatening in *Holy Writ*, to stagger the Counsel of the wicked, and turn the Wisdom of the wisest into Folly. Had they rather desir'd to be instructed than flatter'd by Experience, they would have found in their Profession, instead of a few crown'd happy, ten thousand miscarry in the Means. A good Success, like a fly Parasite, rather sooths than commends our Action ; and like a Coy Mistress, prostitutes her self to Mens Neglect, but frowns on their Ambition. But these are popular Ar-

Arguments, subject almost to common Sense, in which every vulgar Observation may claim a share. Should we search with more subtlety, either as sound *Divines* or deep *Philosophers*, into the mysterious Manner of God's working; we should find no small Argument to be drawn from the Disparity between Divine *Providence* and worldly *Policy*. The Plots and Counterplots of Men are usually grounded, either upon open *Resistance* or sly *Diversion*. The one is taught us in the Book of Nature, where we read of the interchangeable Conquest of the Elements, in their mutual Conflicts and Operations; the other is grounded on *Civil* Observation as well as Nature, which in the shortest and easiest way commonly finds the safest Victory. But God's Almighty Hand, which never knew *Resistance*, nor needs *Diversion*, easily knows how to work its own Ends, by a supernatural Concourse with worldly Agents in their most affected Projects. The same means which wicked Men propose to themselves, as most safely conducive to their desir'd Ends, he makes instrumental to their Ruin; that the most exact Plot, in which human Policy could ever hug her own Invention, may seem the most exquisite

quisite Example of her Shame. Easy was it for the great King of Heaven and Earth, with Thunder and Lightning to have dash'd *Absolom* in pieces, and scorch'd up his Seditious Army; more easily could he have broken the subtle Nets of *Achitophel*'s politick Invention, than *Samson* the *Philistines* Bands, or an Elephant a Spiders Web: but intending rather to make them their own Executioners, he suffers them to run in their own Labyrinth, till at length they meet their Ruin. What way in Nature could *Pharaoh* devise more exquisite to increase the Strength of *Israel*, and make them populous, than to tie 'em to their daily Burdens? Whence could *Moses* have better deriv'd his Greatness in *Pharaoh*'s Court, than from the Bulrush-Cradle floating on the Tears of the weeping River? How could *Pharaoh* have fear'd or expected, in his own Tyrannous Decree, projected for his own Safety and *Israel*'s Redemption, ever to have found *Israel* ransom'd and himself ruin'd? And how little thought he that his own Daughter should preserve that as a Cabinet of Pleasure, which *Moses*'s Mother bestow'd on him as a mournful Coffin? As little thought *Joseph*'s Brethren, in selling him to the *Egyptians*, to have



have purchas'd their own Shame and his future Greatness. Little thought the *Roman* Emperors, by their raging Persecutions, to have sown the Seed of the Church in the Blood of the *Martyrs*, and to have seen Christianity most triumphant in her greatest Wounds. Little thought *Pope Leo* the Tenth in sending his Indulgences into *Germany* to have met with such an Opportunity, as the Peoples Discontent; and that the *Hermite Fryars* Defeat would have stir'd up *Luther's* hot Spirit to give such a fatal Blow to his own Greatness, and set his Tyrannous Hierarchy in such a terrible Combustion. Such is the infinite Wisdom of Divine Providence, to ordain Worldly Policy to afford not only the aptest Instruments, but the exactest Opportunitys to destroy it self; and thereto declare our greatest Weakness, where we repose our greatest Strength.

From this by the way, may we make these two other Observations: First, that God in the Prevention of worldly Plots and Stratagems commonly shews not himself but at the last Push, and seldom discovers our Danger, till we suppose our selves secure. Had his Wisdom run the Course of human Policy, he might have prevented as well as defeated *Achitophel's* Design; he

he might have stir'd up *David's* Jealousy betimes to have shut up *Absolom* in Prison; or, according to the preposterous Rules of the *Ottonian* Justice, might have rewarded his future Treason with a present Execution. *Absolom* might have fail'd as well in the first as in the last Precept; or at least *Achitophel* might have read in *Absolom's* Disposition his wilful Weakness or Inconstancy. But God pursues his own and not our Glory, as being then most willing to shew his Power, when our Hopes or Abilitys can challenge least. Secondly, we may observe that God sits not as an idle Spectator, but interposes himself as a chief Actor on the Theatre of worldly Affairs. It was not only an idle but a wicked Dream of *Epicurus* and his Followers, that God, busy'd in the Contemplation of heavenly Matters, gave over the Government of the World to Chance or Nature; as if he conceiv'd it like a Mill or Water-work, which being once fram'd by an Artificer, and animated by an active Power, works of its own Accord, and preserves in it self the Principles of Motion and Continuance. Which Opinion, for ought I know, might be also fasten'd on our Master *Aristotle*, who not only in his *Physicks* seems to deny a Pro-

Providence: but in the whole Course of his *Philosophy* seems to prefer Nature, as a Deity; whom God should rather serve than command. But here to discover my Opinion freely, I think our *Philosopher* mistaken, in dividing one and the self-same Thing into different Names: to separate God from Nature is to divorce Nature from her self, which seems of it self absurd; but to ascribe Action and Motion to the latter, and appoint the former to sit idle as a Spectator, or at least as a necessary Agent, to serve Nature, is yet more absurd, in that it is to suppose a Finite more excellent than an Infinite: which it is strange how so great a Wit should once imagin.

But we out of the Principles of *Christian* Philosophy may easily be taught a double Concourse of the Creator with the Creature; the one General, which I hold to be no other than what we commonly term *Nature*; the other Special, which human Ignorance or Admiration has term'd *Miracle*: nor can Reason imagin the natural Generation of Things to be any other than a continu'd Creation, in which God Almighty, according to the Aptness and Preparation of the Subject, daily ministers new *Forms*, or conserves  
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the same ; which *Act Divines* term *Preservation*. For to give a Creature without God's immediate Concourse an Ability to produce the like or an equal Substance to it self ; or by its own Power to derive out of that first *Chaos* a new Form or Nature, seems to me to intrench too far on God's Prerogative, I had almost said, to emulate God in the second Part of his Creation.

But to leave this Commonwealth of *Nature* to its first Institution, and enter into the View of *human* Actions ; here we shall find a more special Concurrence of Divine Providence than in the former. To what other Cause can we owe the miraculous Preservation of God's Church, which thro the Violence of so many Ages has preserv'd it self entire, with so small a Number and so great an Opposition ? Time, which has seen the Rise and Fall of so many famous Kingdoms, the Invention and Decay of so many learned Labours, the Erection and Defacing of so many stately Trophys ; Time, which in its vast Gulf has not only swallow'd up Antiquity, but for the most part envy'd her History, has yet cherish'd in her Bosom this one Darling, and kept a sure Register of all her Actions. Should I descend

to particular Examples of God's Concurrency in Man's Actions, I might sooner lose my self than find an End. The most irreligious *Heathens* thro the thick Clouds of Ignorance have often spy'd the Glimpse of God's dreadful Lightning, and quak'd at his Thunder; they have felt his Finger in their Wounds, and acknowledg'd his Strength in their Weakness. Nay, such has been the Power of Almighty God, that he has expos'd their own wicked Actions as a Table of their Confession, and extorted an Acknowledgment of his Victory out of their Blasphemy. *Julian* that wicked *Apostate*, tho as politick to obscure as malicious to oppose the Truth of *Christ Jesus*, was yet in the end constrain'd to shut up his Tyranny with a *Vicisti Galilae*. Thus do we read of *Mahomet* the Second, the first Emperor of the *Turks*, that at the Siege of *Scodra* against the *Christians*, in the defence of so small a City against his mighty Army, finding God his Enemy, he blasphemously ask'd by way of Exprobration, whether God had not enough to do in Heaven, that he should interpose himself in his Affairs on Earth? He that will not deny a God must of necessity grant a Providence; and whoever knows himself and sits into his

own Will and Actions, must needs acknowledge a Supernatural Power, which determin's 'em to act or to suspend their Action. Here might I proceed to tax *Pelagius*, and his latter Spawn the *Jesuits* and *Arminians*, who imagining our Will to be her own Mistress, have admitted God no otherwise than as a Servant or Assistant; as if that Almighty Power was not authoriz'd to pre-ordain, but only bound to second our Conversion. Their Salvation they would rather owe to themselves than *Grace*, as if they sought the first Cause in their own Inclination, and expected nothing of God but a *Moral* and strong Perswasion. But tho indeed they deny a certain and special *Predestination*, yet in words they grant a *Prescience*. Here would I gladly know of 'em, whether God absolutely foresaw *Absolom's* Inclination to reject *Achitophel* or not: if they grant the Negative, they deny God's Prescience; if the Affirmative, I demand again, whether this Foresight could imply a Necessity of Event, or leave *Absolom* to his own free Choice? If they hold the former, they must deny him a Free-will to decline to the other Side, which they mightily endeavour to establish; if the latter, they must either acknowledg  
God's



God's Prescience to be uncertain, against the Ground they have already granted, or at least affirm that a certain Knowledg may be of such Things, as shall never come to pass. Here the *Jesuits* are better provided to shift than answer; like the subtle *Sepes* to make an Escape by troubling the Water, and rather than they would be thought to know Nothing, they'll say any Thing. Where the *Scripture* shews no fair Countenance and *Reason* faints, their Recourse to *School-Subtletys* must be their only Refuge: but were there no Smith in *Israel*, yet might these *Philistines* be intreated, to sharpen our Sword to defend our selves against their Battery. God, say they, from all Eternity foresaw the Inclination of Man's Free-will, upon which he grounded his Decree of withholding or conferring further Grace. Here I must ask again, whether God foresaw it in his own Decree, or in the Disposition of the second Causes? If they assent to the former, then must this Fore-sight in the order of our Understanding, not prevent but rather second the Decree; which they deny. If they stick to the latter, as indeed they do; I demand how second Causes may be suppos'd to work, except they are determin'd and actuated by

the first ? That second Causes work not by their own, but their Owners Strength, is what they maintain ; and to grant an Operation not depending upon the first Agent, would be to suppose an Instrument to work without a Hand. Again, I would ask whether God foreseeing *Achitophel's* Counsel and *Absolom's* Inclination, had the Power to hinder it or not ? If he had, then was it in his Power to foresee what he himself could hinder ; which checks the Certainty of God's Knowledge, and involves an apparent Contradiction : if he had not, how then can we imagin *Him* Omnipotent, who cannot challenge so much Power over second Causes, as to turn and divert 'em to his own Uses ? *Vorstius* and *Episcopius* found this Argument so strong against 'em, that to back their former absurd Opinion, they must add Blasphemy ; allowing God either no Prescience at all, or such as is only uncertain and conjectural : which gross and impious Notion is, I think, enough confuted by the bare naming of it. But I fear I have stay'd here too long, because I have far to go Wherefore having taken a general Survey of the primary Cause of *Achitophel's* Defeat, let us now descend to the second Causes,

ses, which offer themselves next to our Observation.

God's Power has exprest it self legible, as well in the Book of *Nature* as of *Grace*; and natural Agents as they derive their Operations from his Strength, so are they determin'd by his Will, and directed to his Glory. Here we find Nature in second Agents not set against her self, tho rais'd a Pitch beyond her private Inclination; and the first Cause without either Need or Violence, to entertain the Service of the second. Whereupon, before we descend to each particular inferiour Agent, we may raise one general Observation: That Almighty God in bringing to pass Miraculous and Great Events, commonly admits the Co-operation of second Causes. 'Twas undoubtedly as easy for that great Architect of Nature, who out of Waste and Emptiness begat a World, to create as to command; to cause, as to entertain the Operation of inferiour Agents. Here might History shew her self prodigal of Examples, but never Bankrupt. Every Moment in the ordinary Course of human Actions begets some Instance or other to demonstrate God's gracious Love and Favour to the World; who tho able to dash both Policy and Nature out of



Countenance, yet is pleas'd to admit them as his obedient Handmaids. But to explain the secret Co-operation of God by second Causes, is a matter which has heretofore stagger'd *Philosophers*, and puzzl'd the Apprehension of the sharpest *Divines*. Nevertheless so far forth as the infinite Power of God may dispense with Man's Enquiry, we may reduce the Manner of his Working to certain Heads; to decline as much as in us lies these two Enemys of Conception, Obscurity and Confusion. The Action then of God's concurring with second Causes, concerns either the Beginning, the Progress, or the End of the same Act. In the Beginning we may call it either Positive or Negative. The Positive consists either in the furtherance or hindrance of human Actions; both which may be either internal or external. The internal Promotion or Hindrance is again divided into two Acts: for either it concerns the support of the Creature, which in the first Moment is term'd *Creation*, in the Continuance, *Preservation*; or else the Pre-ordination of the Agent, which with our *Divines*, against the Tenet of *Arminius*, I dare to call *Pre-determination*. The external is the offering of some present outward Object to the Perception of the

the *Sense, Will* or *Understanding*; which latter Acts concur as well in God's Hindrance of human Actions: for the same Almighty Power can at once both promote his own and hinder the Counsels of Men. The Hindrance is many ways effected; for the Impediment is cast either on our Authority, our Power, our Will or State. Our Authority of free-working is curb'd and restrain'd by the Law, the Breach whereof is a Sin; as that of *Adam* in Paradise, whose Liberty could not dispense with the tasting of the forbidden Tree. Our natural Power is check'd by many intervenient Causes: First, by cutting off the Agent from Life and Being; as, in the Siege of *Jerusalem*, by smiting in one Night an hundred fourscore and five thousand; or the bringing of *Elias* the Prophet to *Abaziah*, by the consuming of fifty Men with Fire from Heaven. Secondly, by Detraction or Diminution of the Power, as *Jeroboam* was restrain'd from apprehending the Prophet by the drying up of his Hand. Thirdly, by Opposition of equal or greater Strength, as *Uzziah* was hinder'd by *Azariah* and his fourscore Priests from offering in the Temple. Fourthly, by Subtraction or removing of the Object, as  
*Christ*.

*Christ Jesus* sav'd himself from the Violence of the *Jews*, and the *Tribune* sav'd *St. Paul* from the Conspiracy. An Impediment may be cast on our Will either by God's predetermining Power, which against *Arminius* we have formerly maintain'd, or by some outward perswasive Argument. The Arguments by which he dissuades our Will from commencing any Action, are usually drawn from the Topics either of seeming Impossibility and apparent Difficulty, or of Unpleasantness, Loss and Dishonour. By the first, for a while the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were restrain'd from offering Violence to our Saviour; because they knew that the People took him for a Prophet. And thus God heretofore set a Bar betwixt his own People and the Idolatrous *Israelites*, lest they should traffick as well in Sins as Familiarity. By the second, *Joseph's* Brethren were diverted from the Murder of him, because a milder Course seem'd to serve their Purpose. By the third and last, *Joseph* was dissuaded from Adultery with *Potiphar's* Wife, and *David* from touching the Lord's Anointed. An Obstacle may be cast on the Act it self two several Ways: either by taking away the Object, which with some we have reduc'd



to the Impediment of *Power* ; or by disabling the Influx and Power of the *Agent* in reference to the *Patient*, of which we have an Example in the three Children unconsum'd in the fiery Furnace. The Negative Act of God's concurring in Permission is quite opposite to the other, and therefore ought to be squar'd by the same Distinction : for, as *Logicians* teach us, Opposites ought to suffer the same Division. Only from hence we must except the Impediment cast on our Actions by the Law or Authority ; for otherwise would there follow an apparent Contradiction, that the same Act should be a Sin and yet no Sin : a Sin, as it is forbidden by the Law ; and yet no Sin, as it is permitted by the same Power. The aforesaid Acts of God's Concurrence seem to prevent and precede the Action of an inferiour Agent. In the Action it self we may find two special Acts : the one an actual Determination of the Agent to the Object, the other a Direction to the End. An Instance of the former we have in *Herod's* Cruelty upon the Children, which was diverted from our Saviour by the Substitution of another Object ; of the latter in King *Ahasuerus*, who, amidst the Spoils of so many Vir-  
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gin Concubines, lighted on *Esther*, whom Providence had marked out to be the Preserver of the *Jewish* Nation. The Concourse of God after and in the End of human Actions, is no other than the Direction of the Event to a further Purpose, which we observe in the *Jews* Barbarity in crucifying our Saviour; the Execution of whose Malice was found the most exquisite Means of our Salvation. But I have almost lost my self in this Labyrinth, where tho *Philosophy* seems to have taught an Entrance in, yet *Theology* never discover'd a Passage out; as that which begins with Man's smallest Knowledge and in his greatest Ignorance. Hence are we taught, not so far to trust to God's Providence as to neglect the ordinary Means which he offers to our Industry or Observation. *Hezekiah*, tho he had already receiv'd, under God's own Hand and Seal, an additional Lease of fifteen Years to the Date of Life when almost expir'd, yet neglected neither the *Prophet's* Counsel nor the Help of his *Physicians*. And *David* in this Place, a Man after God's own Heart, and confident of his Protection, yet has present recourse to second Causes, as pre-ordain'd of God for *Achitophel's* Defeat and his own Delivery.

very. Which second Causes come next to be trac'd out, and may be reduc'd to these Heads : the impulsive, and the instrumental. The impulsive Cause, which mov'd God to defeat *Achitophel's* Counsel, so far, as according to the Language of Men we may speak of God, was *David's* Prayer, by which he besought him to confound the Counsel of *Achitophel* his profess'd Enemy. The good use of Prayer among devout and pious Men, has always been esteem'd both our first and last Remedy in our greatest Dangers, as being the surest Key which opens and shuts the Door of God's secret Closet. When our Friends shrink from us, and all worldly Stratagems are out of fight ; when Dangers present their *Gorgon-Faces* as hideous as our Fears, and Death stands at our Elbow to summon our Appearance at the last Arraignment ; only Prayer is left as a gracious Orator and an effective Advocate. Tho *Achitophel* in Wit and Industry would shew himself a Politician, yet *David* in Sanctity must express himself a Prophet : and tho *Absolom's* Hopes are grounded on his worldly Strength, yet *David's* Strength is built on God's Protection. Nor in his sacred Ejaculation, by which he address'd himself to God's Will  
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and Mercy, was his Desire untutor'd or his Devotion ignorant : he knew to whom he spake, and observ'd a Distance ; as fearing lest his religious Zeal might seem unmannerly, if unseasonable. For the greatest Offices are commonly subject to the greatest *Solacisms* ; and Prayer, the trustiest Messenger of Devotion, if not well-directed or acquainted with her Embassy, may soon degenerate into Superstition. But so well instructed was *David* in his Religious Courtship, as if the End of his Suit had been the Institution of others, and his Example were to be our Rule. Whether we respect the Author, the End, Object, Time or Form of his earnest Petition, we shall find him as discreet as he was religious, as owing his Oraisons no less to Knowledg than Devotion. First we find his Prayer to be neither ignorant nor hypocritical : but, as proceeding from a generous and uncorrupted Heart, usher'd in by Sincerity and accompany'd with Contrition. He measur'd his Meditations rather by Weight than Number ; he was not taught as a *Popish Penitentiary* to count his *Beads* instead of his Prayers, and make his Fingers Intelligencers to his Faith. He knew not so much Complement as the Devil's

Devil's formal Courtiers, who desire as little to be believ'd of God as understood of Men; and esteem Prayer to be rather a decent *Formality*, than a Religious Exercise. Secondly, the End of his Prayer was no other than the Preservation of his People, and his own Defence; nor even in his own Defence did he seek Revenge, but Justice: his Prayer was not directed against the Person but the Sin; nor did his Desire, for ought I see, so much tend to the Ruin of *Achitophel*, as to the Diversion of his Policy. *Turn*, says he, *the Wisdom of Achitophel into Folly*. We find not in this *Form* the affected Curses of the *Romish* Synagogue, which raving *Shimei* then dodging him in his way, might as easily have taught, as *David* suffer'd. But the *Pope* may perhaps *command* what *David* never durst *intreat* of God; and what is a *King* and *Prophet* to *Christ's* universal Vicar, or *David's* Prerogative to his Supremacy? Too much might it be thought for *David* to banne or excommunicate a graceless Son or a Rebellious Subject: yet may it perhaps seem too little for *Peter's* Successor, in whose Hands are the Keys of *Heaven*, *Hell* and *Purgatory*, to shut and open at his pleasure. Indeed I am loth to  
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jest in earnest, or turn a serious Blasphemy into a pleasant *Irony* : but nothing mocks us more than our shameful Actions, and the same Power, which turns human Wisdom into Folly, makes it to Men ridiculous. To bewail Folly with *Heraclitus*, argues Charity : but to laugh at it with *Democritus*, cannot be interpreted Sin, but Justice. Thirdly, the Object, to which *David's* Prayer was directed, was no other than God himself, as one best acquainted with his Necessity, and most able to relieve him. Had he been taught the Complement of our *Roman* Courtiers, or the Religious Mysterys of *Popery*, he might have prepar'd God's Ears before by the Mediation of some *Saint*, or at least have made Provision of some enchanted Relick to preserve him safe from Danger. The holy *Legend*, had he liv'd in these riper Times, might doubtless have instructed him in the particular Offices of each *Saint*, as well as the antient *Roman* Records in the Prerogative of each inferiour Deity. A thousand to one, but some humble St. *Francis* would have been singl'd out to deliver his Petition ; or some charitable St. *Thomas Becket*, who could not deny a *Parrot* his Assistance, would have been  
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mov'd with the Petition of a King. But *David*, it seems, better knew the King himself, than these his Courtiers, and therefore neglecting these inferior Officers, presents his Suit to no other but God himself; whom nevertheless he found, if we believe the *Scriptures*, easy enough to hear his Prayer, and grant his Request. Fourthly, the Time and Opportunity of his Prayer cannot but minister somewhat to Observation. He defer'd not his Petition, like a Malefactor on the Gibbet, or a profane Seaman in Perplexity, to the last Extremity: but he begins, where desperate and careless Sinners would at least desire to end. No sooner had Fame, as a swift Pursivant, overtaken *Achitophel* in his Revolt, but he makes his Recourse to Almighty God, as very well knowing that it was his Property rather to command than obey Destiny. The same Hand of Vengeance, which by *Moses's* Intreaty was restrain'd from the Overthrow of the Idolatrous *Israelites*, and by a general Prayer and Repentance from the Desolation of *Niniveh*, he could not imagin either slack or impotent in the defeat of his Enemy's, or in the defence of his faithful Servant. Fifthly, we observe his Prayer to be short and pithy, not

tedious and impertinent ; as thinking it meeter that his Heart should dictate to his Tongue, than his Tongue interpret to his Heart. His Prayer was not crude and unconcocted, abounding with as many Tautologys as Words ; but seasonable and pathetick, expressing no less than his earnest Desire, and directed no further than the present Purpose. Here, as our Saviour in the Gospel heretofore tax'd the *Pharisees* of long and tedious Babling, might I proceed to reprehend some *Pharisees* of our Time, were I sure to be my own Interpreter. But I very much fear, lest thro the sides of a few factious Enthusiastick Spirits, I should be suspected to wound Religion. The Sixth and last Circumstance in *David's* Prayer was, that it proceeded from him *Extempore*, as best futing with an extemporary and sudden Accident. Hence our modern Mass *Priests* might have been taught a more profitable Act of Prayer, than the Sale of set Liturgys for all occasions. No human Invention could ever prove so infinite, as to sift the precise Corners of every Man's Conscience : nor is it in the Wit of Man but God, to dictate a present Form for all future Accidents, and prescribe a special Antidote against all Temptations.

tations. Herein commonly the Physician shews himself no sooner than the Disease, as one who would have us depend rather on his present Favour, than our premeditated Counsel; and in such Cases I take that of our Saviour, *It shall be given you at that Hour*, to be understood. Notwithstanding, from this or other the like ejaculatory Prayers, warranted by Scripture and practis'd by holy Men, little ground of Argument can the *Brownists* and *Fanaticks* take for their Opinion, who admitting no distinction betwixt publick and private Prayer, would have all to proceed from an extemporary and sudden Meditation, as if God could not as well direct our Studys as strengthen our Delivery; and there were not a Place as well for Attention to follow, as for Invention to dictate in our Devotion. For the Confutation of which unwarrantable Industry, we need go no further than our Saviour's own Example, who prescrib'd us a set Form of Prayer; or *David's* at least, of whom we now speak, and who has left behind him so many sweet and Divine Meditations as a Testimony of his Sanctity, and a Pattern for our Imitation. Thus far have I discours'd of the *impulsive* second Cause of *Achitophel's* Defeat.



The Instrumental Causes, to which my Method is in the next place engag'd, either concern the immediate Prevention of *Achitophel's* Design, or the Discovery of it to *David* and his Army. The former, consisting of *Hushai's* Loyalty and *Ab-salom's* Weakness, discovers to us as well the Character of a trusty Subject, preferring his King's Safety before his own Ambition; as of an unexperienc'd young Prince, more willing to hearken to the Voice of Flattery, than wise Direction. The latter shews God's Power in the weak Simplicity of a silly Maid, the Instrument of this Discovery; which Points I shall now briefly touch at.

As much as the Dignity of a King transcends the *Subject*, so great is the Obligation of a *Subject* to his King: nor is the Duty less, which we owe to the Safety of our Sovereign, than the Safety which we our selves challenge in his Protection, as the Center next under God, from which we derive our Honours, and to which we owe our Services. *Hushai*, *David's* trusty Servant, was not ignorant of this Duty, nor was his Knowledg better tutour'd than his Industry. The same Hand of Kingly Munificence, which dispens'd him his Honours, pointed out to him

him the Lines of his obliged Loyalty : nor was he more slack to obey, than *David* to command. *Return into the City*, said *David* to *Hushai*, and say unto *Absolom*, *I will be thy Servant, O King, as I have been thy Father's Servant ; so shalt thou defeat the Counsel of Achitophel.* Almighty God, who formerly heard *David's* Prayer, directed his Advice and *Hushai's* industrious Loyalty. In undertaking which Design we shall find *David* bless'd in so good a Servant, and *Hushai* worthy of so good a Master ; whose Conduct of so dangerous a Business, in so honest and discreet a Way, seems to copy out to us all the Offices of an *honest Politician*. In the first place we find his Obedience and Resolution, neither shrinking from the awful Looks of Danger, nor forfeiting his Master's Trust. The Apprehension of an unexpected Friend or reconcil'd Enemy, might have betray'd his Errand to watchful Jealousy : Suspicion might have call'd his very Looks to examination ; and guilty Fear, the Child of Treason, might have deliver'd him over as a Spy to present Execution. *Achitophel's* deep Insight in State-affairs, and *Absolom's* Confidence in his Oraculous Advice, might have either founded his Disposition, or dash'd his Counsel out

of countenance ; and then should he find his best Service rewarded either with Death or Torture : at least had his Message met the best Success, and ransom'd his Master *David* from so imminent a Conspiracy ; yet, according to the Rules of worldly Policy, he could not suppose even *Absalom's* Jealousy more dangerous than *David's* Obligation. Princes unwillingly owe such Courtesys as are greater than themselves, and commonly prefer a bankrupt Debtor before an over-deserving Creditor ; as if the very sight or remembrance of a beneficial Friend should seem a perpetual Exprobration of Ingratitude. It is counted a less Disparagement among worldly Tyrants to want Justice than Power : not to be thought able to requite, than willing to offend. These Objections urg'd to *Hushai's* likely Conjecture and politick Observation, might easily have check'd his Forwardness in *David's* Service, and strangl'd his Resolution in the very Birth. But he out of a clear and courageous Spirit neither fears an Enemy, nor suspects a Friend ; nor dos he seek his Duty abroad in other Mens Forecasts, which he might find at home in his own Bosom. In the second place we may observe



serve his trusty Love to his Master *David*. Occasion might here seem to smile on his Advancement; and *Absolom*'s growing Fortunes, like the rising Sun, might have tempted his Ambition. *David* seems ready to depart, and *Absolom* to enter the Scene of Life and Sovereignty: Who in point of Policy would not rather choose to have his Fortunes live in *Absolom*, than die in *David*? To have betray'd the Father's Trust, might have engag'd the Son's Affection; and to raise himself a Fortune out of his Master's Ruin, tho the greatest Breach in the Laws of Loyalty, yet had seem'd one of the chiefest Maxims in the Art of Policy. However he, as a faithful *Subject*, respects not what he might, but what he ought to do; not so much what Occasion might offer, as what Religion might be known to justify; as one, who would rather owe his Misfortunes to his trusty Service, than his Preferment to dishonest Treachery. Thirdly, we may note his Secrecy and Discretion in managing so great, so dangerous a Project. He invaded not the young Prince's Ears with a sudden and unexpected Onset; or, like an intruding Busy-body, shew'd himself more offici-

ous than wise, to outrun the Goal and let slip before occasion. He did not prevent but expect his Opportunity; and suffer'd *Absalom* to ask before he thought it proper to give his Counsel: that *Absalom* might seem more indebted to *Hushai's* Wisdom, than *Hushai* to *Absalom's* Approbation. Nor in his Advice did *Hushai* shew himself factious or unmannerly; he seem'd only to dislike *Achitophel's* Direction in this one Design, but not without a silent Acknowledgment of his former Wisdom. *The Counsel*, said he, *which Achitophel has given at this Time is not good.* The Advantage of *Achitophel's* Reputation among those that had try'd his Policy, and of the Peoples Prejudice at such as should think or speak the contrary, taught *Hushai's* Discretion to disapprove rather the Counsel than the Counsellor, and mitigate his Dissent with some Colour of former Approbation. This Design, inspir'd by God himself, directed by *David*, and practis'd by *Hushai*, seems to give warrant to this Observation: *That there is as well a good as an evil Policy; as well an honest and discreet Conveyance of our Actions, grounded on Religion, as an indirect Proceeding, engag'd to unwarranted and unlawful Methods.* He that

that would have us be *innocent as Doves*, has also taught us to be *wise as Serpents*: and he that dispenses to us the Means to atchieve our Ends, permits us also the properest and best Direction. But how precisely to divide betwixt an honest *Providence* and an unlawful *Policy*; neither on the one side to violate God's Precepts, nor on the other to neglect our own Right, seems a Matter as curious to determine as necessary to understand. To be at once God's Servant and the Times, seems incompatible, especially in such a disorderly Mixture of human Actions; in which, as *Bodin* would counsel us, it behoves a wise Man to shew himself as various as the Season. We cannot command, but only obey Occasion. The Means and Opportunities, of which Statesmen take advantage in defeating their Opposites, are rather found than chosen; and the Manner and Direction of our Projects is rather prescrib'd to us by Art, than Skill: inasmuch as its Causality depends not on our Will but Observation. However I think, that between the Iniquity of our Times and the strictness of a good Conscience, a space is left wide enough to give a Passage to a religious and wise Discretion; and by how much the Plots of Men  
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and Changes of State seem more dangerous to godly Men, by so much is their Care and Providence in declining the Snares of the wicked the better warranted. For God condemns in us, as well the Neglect of our Care as of his *Providence*; as one, whose Wisdom seldom works without, but commonly with and in our Industry.

The second Instrumental Cause, which shews it self in the Privation of *Achitophel's* Counsel, was found in *Absalom's* Inclination. *Achitophel's* Projects having long since pass'd the first Conception, are now come to the very Birth: but *Absalom's* unexperienc'd Youth, as an unskilful Midwife, made 'em abortive in the Delivery. The Ground of his Error I can interpret to be no other than the usual Disease of Princes, who had rather be sooth'd than advis'd; and have Ears more open to the Tongue of Flattery, than pliant to the Heart of Loyalty. Flattery was very well term'd by *Tacitus*, the old Sickness of the *Roman* Commonwealth; and the Love of Flattery, the Stain and Blemish of the wisest Emperors. They, whom neither the Sword could conquer, nor Treason undermine; whom neither Pleasure could allure, nor Riches per-

perswade, nor Greatness tempt to the least Dishonour, only Flattery could bring into Subjection. For, as self-Love, the Object of Flattery, is most universal, and no where excluded human Nature: so Adulation every where finds occasion to enter without a Resistance or Impeachment. And whereas all other Vices are countermanded and check'd by their contrary Vertues, this one seems to challenge a Prerogative above Virtue her self, in that she finds acceptance among her Enemys, and grows stronger by Opposition. No wonder then if *Absolom's* youthful Weakness, unable to bear the Siege of so puissant a Beleaguer, revolted, if I may so speak, from *Achitophel's* *irreligious Loyalty*, and yielded to *Hushai's* pious Flattery. *Hushai's* adulatory Counsel we may observe to consist in three special Circumstances: First, that he perswaded him to enter the Field in his own Person, and make himself the Owner, as well of the Victory as the Sovereignty; as tho it seem'd a matter not becoming the Greatness of a King to owe the Honour of his Scepters to the Valour of a Servant. Secondly, in his Advice he seem'd more firmly opinionated of the Peoples Love, and *Absolom's* popular Estimation. What  
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we desire we easily believe ; nor do we prize our Perfections dearer in themselves, than in the Admiration of others. Our Vertues never please us better, than when by Reflection they seem increas'd in the Glass of vulgar Opinion. *Sophocles* the Tragedian shall not be so well accepted in describing Mens Manners as indeed they were ; as *Euripides*, who describ'd 'em as they ought to be. More Honour sound *Homer* in expressing Mens Manners to the best, than *Hegemon* in doing 'em to the worst. And however the two famous Painters, *Panson* in limning out the most deform'd, and *Cleophon* the most semblable and lively Pictures, express'd in their Work as much Art as Industry ; yet whoever with *Polygnotus* can so dextrously handle his Pencil as to paint out Mens *best Parts beyond Truth and Reality*, will easily purchase the Reputation of the rarest Workmanship. Thirdly, *Hushai's* Counsel seem'd more to aim at *Absolom's* Honour and Magnificence, in that he perswaded him to oppose his Father *David* rather by open Strength than undermining Policy. For *Absolom* to have intrap'd his Father by a secret Ambush, had been term'd rather a Treason than a Victory : and by how much the

Field



Field is more ample than the Closet, by so much dos a clancular Conspiracy seem inferior to an open Opposition. To screw himself into his Father's Kingdom by cunning Engins might derogate from his Valour, and obscure the Glory of the Conquest. A pitch'd Field would be thought the best Scene for Honour to display her Ensigns on; and the Sword, the most graceful Actor. These flattering Suggestions of *Hushai*, however prejudicial to *Absolom's* Design, yet had the advantage of *Achitophel's* well-weigh'd Policy. For as sick and squeamish Stomachs had rather their Appetite than Judgment should umpire their Desires, affecting for the time rather to be pleas'd than profited: so *Hushai's* Advice, temper'd and season'd, as it seems, to *Absolom's* vainglorious and ambitious Humour, was as soon swallow'd as suggested. From which Example practis'd by *Hushai*, and parallel'd by the like Instances in all Times and Historys, will rise this Observation: That *Flattery is the most dangerous and exquisite Policy*; a Proposition requiring no other Confirmation than common, Practice, wherein we esteem those Axioms establish'd as the most undoubted Truths, which by ordinary Experience are found most successful.

ful. A happy Success is that, which crowns our Actions: nor is our natural Knowledge more indebted to sensible Experiment, than our Politicks to *civil* Observation. Hence an ordinary Path seems to be trodden out by *Policy* to all Preferments, thro the back-Door of Adulation, which is open to every base and undeserving Parasite: while Desert, waiting for a Turn at the Fore-Gate, may stand and freeze e'er it obtain Admission, and pine away in fruitless Expectation. No wonder then if Flattery, which some have term'd the eighth liberal Science, has gotten the start of the other Seven, having been try'd to be the most compendious and ready way to all Advancement; or at least one, to whom all other Professions owe their Grace, and direct their Service. The curious Workmanship of *Artificers*, the subtle Nets and pleasant Whimsys of *Philosophers*, the hir'd Voice of *Lawyrs*, the sugar'd Medicines of *Physicians*, the oily Tongues of *Courtiers*, the scraping Legs of *Peasants*, nay I might add, the set and formal Gravity of *Divines*, seem all to be Co-rivals in courting this proud Mistress, and prostituting their Service to Adulation: And that we mayn't wonder how she can at once sute these several Admirers,

mirers, she, like *Proteus*, can change her Shape, and adapt her Dress to their various Interests; for she is not always cloth'd in the same Weeds or Colours; she can put on *black* as well as *white*: in the Seat of Justice she can shew her self in Purple, in the Courts of Princes she can strut in Silks, and too often, I'm afraid, in the chief Posts of the Church can shroud it self in Lawn or Scarlet. But here I dare not look any more abroad, lest I should spy Flattery dispensing Offices, conferring Dignitys, conniving at Offences, violating Privileges, debasing Worth, disgracing Learning and undermining Honesty. Wherefore with *Noah's* two modest Sons I on purpose look awry from all this, and go backwards; that I may not even see what I have no Hands to hide, no Brow to justify: especially considering, that should I with *Actæon* wander in so wide a Forest, my unwary Eye-sight might unhappily glance on *Diana* naked, and make it self guilty as well of Danger as Observation. But O that Flattery, since it is plain she has this mighty sway, would be taught by *Hushai* her best Office, which is to promote the Common Good and the Sovereign's Preservation! so should we never fear  
that



that Censure, which *Tacitus* gives of the *Roman Senators* under *Tiberius* ; that they ambitiously stood up in the *Senate*, and strove to outvie each other in servile Baseness. Much less should we deserve to be laugh'd at with those *Thebans*, who, as we read in *Justin*, fawning too much on *Philip's* Greatness, bought their new Protection with the Loss of their antient Liberty.

But dismissing this Topick, I now proceed to the Instrument of the Discovery. Almighty God, in bringing about Matters of the greatest Moment, rather makes than finds the fittest Instruments, as being more willing that the Subject should be indebted to his Choice, than his Choice to our Estimation. He, to whom it was as easy to create as to suborn a Creature, could as well give as take occasion ; and for his Sacred Purpose could as soon fortify the weakest as single out the strongest. *Achitophel's* politick Advice suggested to *Absolom*, defeated by *Hushai*, communicated to *Zadock* and *Abiathar* the Priests, is at length discover'd to *David's* Servants by a *Woman* ; a silly *Maid*, whose unexperienc'd Youth, unable Sex, and meaner Estate, could exprefs no other Character than Weakness,

ness, is notwithstanding design'd out by God, as the choicest Instrument for securing the State of *Israel* and a King's Delivery. The rarest Workmanship is commended as much by the worst as by the best Instruments; and it is God's frequent Practice (to speak with the *Apostle*) to make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of his Mercy. Our Saviour Christ, to whom all the Emperors and Kings of the Earth ow'd Observance, whose least Alliance could have royaliz'd the basest Family, was pleas'd notwithstanding, as an Inmate, to make himself a Passage into this World thro *Mary's* neglected Womb. His Cradle was no better than a Crib, and his first Entertainment no higher than *Joseph's* Fortunes. And to that of his Birth agreed the Meanness of his Life and Actions: he might have breath'd in the Air of some Princes Court a Kingly Education, or committed the Tuition of his Youth to the Institution of Learned *Doctors*. *Rome* was then in her Pride, and set the Foot of her Magnificence on the Neck of the proudest Nations. *Athens*, the Mother of the *Grecian* Wisdom, had long since triumph'd in her fruitful and glorious

Offspring. And the *Scribes* and *Doctors* at *Jerusalem* sitting in *Moses* Chair, could have challeng'd a Right beyond the *Delphick Oracle*. Yet do we find neither his Knowledg father'd by the most famous Teachers, nor his Manners indebted to the severest Institution. The Shop of a *Mechanick* seem'd his first *Academy*; The Publicans and Sinners were his familiar Hosts and Friends; and the poor *Fishermen* returning from their broken Nets, were admitted into the Number of his choice Disciples.

Hence may we *Christians* learn, not to repose so much Confidence in our Great and Mighty *Confederates*, as to neglect the Industry and good Will of our Weak and Mean *Associates*. *Virgil's* silly *Gnat* could awaken the sluggish *Shepherd* from his improvident slumber, to decline the approaching *Serpent*; and the impotent *Pismire* has been taught to rouse up the sleeping *Lyon*, to make an Escape from the Hunter's Nets.

Thus we find the Chain of God Almighty's Providence link'd together by so many dependant Causes; begun in God's Counsel; seconded by *David's* Prayer; continu'd in *Hushai's* Loyalty  
and



*The wicked Politician.* 83

and *Absalom's* Weakness, shut up at length in the Action of a silly Maid. Which latter Hint will introduce a third *Scene*, representing *Achitophel's* last *Catastrophe* and bloody Tragedy.

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ACHIL

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# ACHITOPHEL:

OR

*The True PICTURE of a  
wicked POLITICIAN.*

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PART III.

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**H**E must needs run, whom Desperation leads and the Devil drives. That old Serpent, which first set Mischief a-work, scorns as much to retire as he delights to persevere, and neither slacks nor stops his Pace till he find the Place of Execution. How far his wicked Industry has gone hand in hand with *Achitophel's* treacherous Designs, I have before shewn.  
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The Defeat of his pernicious Counsel, with the Causes presenting themselves to the Horrour of a guilty Conscience, seconded as well with outward Disgrace as inward Discontent, turns his own Weapon against himself, and makes his Policy the most exquisite Instrument of his own Destruction. This great *Politician*, whom as the Oracle of God the People of *Israel* had never suspected of Inconstancy or accus'd of Indiscretion; whose wise Service had instructed *Absolom* in all his Parts, and so judiciously, as it were, chalk'd out to him the Way to Sovereignty, might seem to deserve more in the Eyes of *Absolom* than Misprision. What less reward can our best Industry expect or Gratitude express, than Acknowledgment or Approbation? What greater Evidence of present Ability can our Understandings minister or our Hopes promise, than the Stamp and Seal of our former Actions? Had *Hushai* ever shew'd himself so wise or *Achitophel* so weak, that *Hushai* in the Scale should overpoise *Achitophel*? Shall the Fancy of a shallow Courtier conquer the Wit and Experience of so great a Statesman; and the Tongue of Flattery over-reach the deep Grounds of a settl'd



Judgment? What then remains for *Achitophel* but his sudden Flight, to express his noble Indignation, and foreshew *Absolom*'s Ruin in his own? He will hang himself first to teach *Absolom* the Way; and to outstrip him in the last Act, rather politickly prevent than basely fear the shameful stroke of Execution. With reference to which, we may observe that the Actions preceding his Death are express'd in these four Circumstances. First, that he sadl'd his Ass; Secondly, that he went Home; Thirdly, that he set his House in order; and Fourthly, that he hang'd himself. In the first we may take notice of his Tyranny, for imposing on his silly Ass the Burden of his Transgression. In the Second his Treachery, in that he left his Master in his greatest Extremity. In the Third his worldly Providence, in preferring the Preservation of his temporal Estate before the Salvation of his Soul. In the Fourth his desperate Execution of himself in distrust of God's Mercy, and daring his Justice to the last Extremity. The latter Clause concerns his Ceremonious Funeral, which however in it self it was a Passion, as we regard *Absolom* as the Subject; yet so far as it may refer to his

his former Testament and Ordination, in which this may seem included, it may be term'd an Action, in which he shew'd himself ambitious to file and furbish over the stain of his shameful Life and End with an Honourable Burial. These are the Lists of my present Meditation, and the Parts of that Scene upon which I now enter; and first, that he *sadl'd his Afs.*

So contagious has been the Sin of our first Parents, that it not only usurp'd Jurisdiction over Mankind, the spawn of our Father *Adam*; but invaded without resistance Nature's universal Monarchy: insomuch that the Heavens, Elements, Plants, and Beasts themselves, by the Divine Institution of their Creation, as disdain- ing to serve Ingratitude, are by the Apo- stle said to groan under their tedious Bur- den, and desire to be at liberty. Why the Creatures should desire this Freedom, four Reasons are alledg'd by *Peter Martyr* on the *Romans*. First, because of their perpetual Turmoils and Labours, in that they serve only for the Use of Man. Se- condly, because they do together suffer the same Affliction. Thirdly, out of a Sympathy and Fellow-feeling of one ano- thers Adversity. Fourthly and lastly,

which is the greatest of all, because they are constrain'd to become the servile Instruments of Sin, and by consequence the Subjects of God's Fury. This Wrath of God, tho general, as I have said, to all the Creatures, we find no where more legible, than in the silly Ass, a Beast created, as it might seem, to torture it self to supply the Defect of Man's Industry: in which, according to the *Egyptian Hieroglyphicks*, Nature seems to have pattern'd out to us the exact Image of *Patience, Fortitude and Frugality*; Gifts not unworthy the Choice of the most generous Temper, had not the Sin of Man expos'd them rather to Scorn, than Imitation. Such is the unchristian Censure of our Supercilious Times, that Men disdain to salute Vertue, except she come accoutred in Golden Garments: Of this poor Creature notwithstanding, whose Name they scorn, they cannot want the Use. The Ignominy of a servile Disposition is the Reward of his best Service: the profitable Fruits of his painful Industry are the Glory and Improvement of his Master's ambitious Husbandry. If such Injustice offer'd by a Man to a servile Beast seem opposite to the Laws of common

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mon Equity, which assigns to every thing its own; how greatly in the Eyes of every *Christian* Judge swells their Tyranny, who command their Servants and Inferiors to carry the Burden of their Transgressions, as tho they meant to ride 'em on the Spur with themselves to Hell? The Obedience of *Achitophel's* Ass to serve him in this wicked Action was only Passive, as of one to whom the Law of Nature had prescrib'd no other Rule than his Master's Reins: but the sacred Image of God stamp'd in the reasonable Soul of Man, is to us both Law and Liberty; as well to preserve the Rights of Magistrates as our own Privilege, and an Obedience we justly owe to our Superiors both *Active* and *Passive*, so far forth as it may consist with the Right of Nature and the Glory of God; as being that which he expressly commands and no Community can want. But when the Sword of the Magistrate pretends a Title to any Part of Divine Prerogative, it is always oppos'd by the Right of the Cause or the Sincerity of a good Conscience, on which as on a Rock of Adamant, it may sooner hack it self to pieces than make a Breach for Entry. Hence wise Magistrates may be taught

taught to exact no more of their Inferiors than their Commission from God dares to countenance, or their Duty to him commands : much less in regard of their own Worth to slight the good Offices of the meanest Servant. Our Consciences and Opinions are seldom so flexible as our Joynts to fawn on Greatness ; nor can the Judgment of the wisest Governor challenge so much Rule in the weakest Understanding as to command Opinion. *Balaam's* Ass could see the Angel of the Lord with his Sword drawn against him, when his Master's Eyes were shut ; who had therefore good reason to leave beating his poor Beast, when he open'd his Mouth to prevent the Danger. But if any wise *Christian* desire the Ministerial Offices of these servile Creatures, let them imitate the Example of our Saviour Christ, who came meekly on an Ass riding into *Jerusalem* ; where the Ensigns of gracious Acceptance and the Shouts of *Hosanna's* applauded his Arrival : which might indeed well be, since according to his Character he came designing to save and do good, and not like *Achitophel* to betray his Friend. Which is the next Circumstance that waits our Observation.

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The trueſt Touchſtone of Friendſhip is Adverſity, which commonly unmaskſ our Enemyſ to Diſcovery, and ſingles out our beſt Friendſ for Trial. Here *Achitophel*, as an ill Actor, fainted in the laſt Scene, and choſe rather to ſhew himſelf what he indeed was, than what he ought to be. His Maſter *Absolom*, whom he had engag'd into ſo great a Danger, he leſt to greater. Sink he might, or ſwim for him, as the windy Guſt of his new Counſel, or the inconstant Tide of Occaſion pleas'd to befriend him. His great Hopes, grounded on *Absolom*'s Riſe, and promiſing ſo much in the Bud, began to wither e'er they ſaw the Bloom; and a vain Project it ſeem'd to him to venture with a Bankrupt, and out of his Maſter's blaſted Field to expect a Harveſt. If *Absolom* will needs wed himſelf to his own Will and his Seducers Counſel, let him run his own Hazard: *Achitophel* ſtands no further engag'd than his own Direction. If *Absolom* fall ſo ſhort of his ambitious Wiſhes, as *Achitophel*'s wiſe Augury ſuppoſes, let him ſuffer by himſelf, as not deſerving *Achitophel*'s Pity or Society. He was once warn'd, and therefore twice arm'd to withſtand ſo weak  
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an Assailant as *Hushai*, his pretended Friend. And why shall *Achitophel* appear so superstitious, as to observe him, who neglects himself and slights his Friends? Two Dangers here offer'd themselves at once; one was the Desertion of his Young Master, the other the Neglect of his own Estate. But with a Politician the Choice is easy; and therefore is it time to hie him home and set his own House in order, having left the Community in a Combustion. His Master might as well find him absent as neglect him present, and sooner meet him in his Death than Counsel.

From this Example a good Christian may be taught so much Policy, as to try his Friends in Adversity, before he trust them in Prosperity. Those Vermin, which undermine the House, are taught to run from the Ruin and quit the Mansion which before preserv'd 'em, having never lov'd it any further than it serv'd their own purpose. But a true Friend hides himself like a Glow-worm obscur'd in the Day of Prosperity, reserving his Light for the gloomy Night of Adversity. *Hushai*, as we have formerly seen, had  
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less reason to suspect *Achitophel's* Head to want *Absolom's* Arm, than *David's* Arm to want Direction: yet however to express the Loyalty of a Subject, he chose rather to cast himself on rash Adventure than known Experience, and hazard the Shipwrack of himself to save a Friend. If any Man should ask how far Friendship may challenge a Jurisdiction in our Conversation? God will answer, that *He* must first join and interest himself in the Matter, before Men can in earnest shake hands and be Friends. A true and just Amity shines not so much in the Subject in which it grows, as on the Object on which it grows; as that which desires not so much to purchase as to deserve Applause. It was a poor shift of *Naaman*, out of the Sincerity of his unfeign'd Love, thus to excuse his feign'd Idolatry: *When I come into the Temple of Rimmon, and my Master boweth down to the Image and leaneth on my shoulder, and he leaneth down with me; the Lord be merciful to me in this Thing.* Had his Eye offended him, or his Hand mistook his Message, he had not only sufficient Warrant but Command to pluck out the one and cut off the other: and much more  
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are we warranted to dissolve the strongest Contract betwixt outward Friends, where God shakes his Rod between a Friend's Impiety and our Affection. But neither of these Motives found footing in *Achitophel's* Design. Had the distrust or dislike of his Master's Cause dissuaded the Furtherance of it, he had not suffer'd him to run so far beyond prevention. Had his Motive afterwards grounded it self on Justice, he might have turn'd his Counsel another way; rather to his Master's Good than his own Ruin: at least by his Submission he might have piec'd up this Breach of Loyalty, and have cast his Fortunes on so favourable a Calm as *David's* Reconcilement to his dear tho rebellious *Absolom*. But *Absolom's* Case was desperate, his own Treason evident, *David's* remissive Pardon unlikely, and his own House unsettl'd: and therefore upon the Grounds of his worldly Policy, he thought it more expedient to arise and go home, and set his House or Family in order; which is the next thing that comes to be consider'd.

Herein *Achitophel*, tho a wicked Caytiff, scarce deserving a good Epithet, seem'd to shew as much Piety as Policy;



in that he settl'd his Estate by Providence while he liv'd, which after his Death he foresaw might be shipwrack'd by Dissension or Confusion. So much of the Image of God he had left undefac'd in him, as shew'd him some obscure Glimpse of Eternity; while he sought that Being in Posterity by Propagation, which the Distasters of the Times were readier to cancel than preserve: a Precedent surmounting the Example of many *Christians* of our Times, who imagining all the World to be born for them and them for themselves, neglect former Precedents, and stop the Passage to all Posterity: as if the Line drawn out so many Ages from their first Father *Adam*, ought to break off with themselves, and attain its highest Pitch in their Perfections. It was a notable tho arrogant Reply of *Iphicrates* to *Hermodius* in *Plutarch*, who boasted too much of his continu'd Line and antient Nobility: *My Nobility begins in me, whereas thine ends in thee*; in which he vaunted himself by Providence and Vertue to have as much advanc'd and improv'd, as the other had lower'd and lessen'd his Family and Fortunes. To lend Posterity a Head may to a wise Man seem a greater  
 Glory

Glory than to borrow from Ancestors a Tail: and on the other side, to play away in sport our Predecessors Labours, a greater Dishonour, than to piss on our Parents Ashes or raze their Monuments. Among all the temporal Blessings promis'd or deriv'd as Rewards to his faithful Servants, I find none greater in holy Writ than the multiplying of their Seed and spreading of their Family : *Behold*, says God to *Abraham*, *I will make of thee a mighty People*. And that which God in his special Favour prizes as so great a Recompence to his best Favorites, shall unworthy Man esteem a Trifle, and value so far below the Rate ? *He that provides not for his Family is worse than an Infidel*, says the *Apostle*. Not, I suppose, that a provident *Heathen* is absolutely to be prefer'd before a negligent Professor : but that in this Comparison of settling a Man's Estate after him in regard of Posterity, a wise Infidel might challenge a Precedency before a careless *Christian*, according to that in the *Gospel* : *The Children of this World are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light*. Herein *Achitophel's* Policy shook hands with Honesty, which seldom met before in Consort : but no sooner could they meet

meet but part, as if they meant to meet no more. He settl'd his worldly Estate on Earth, but forgot his eternal Hope in Heaven. He reserv'd to himself out of all his Legacys the Worm of a guilty Conscience, which he could no more shake off than himself. Which leads our Discourse to a second Observation arising from this Point : *That worldly-wise Politicians prove most improvident for the future Life, and prefer Temporal good Things before eternal Happiness.*

*Where a Man's Treasure is, there will his Heart be also,* says our Blessed Saviour. Whence a Reason may be given why *Achitophel*, despairing of any Portion among the *Saints* in Heaven, set his Mind to dispose of his Possessions here on Earth. Riches, which the wisest *Philosophers* esteem'd only a Complement of temporal Felicity, are the End of their Ambition : while the Fruition of eternal Joys in Heaven, stands as doubtful in their Hopes as unsettl'd in their Opinion. But this Providence in disposing worldly Affairs, at the best can be reputed no other than the Child of *Nature*, whose Mole-eyes thro the glimmering Light of human Reason can hardly pierce so far as its own Sphere ;

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much less thro the Clouds of human Ignorance and the World's contagious Fogs, can it open it self a Passage to that eternal Glory, to which none but the Light of Grace can direct or command an Entrance. No wonder then if worldly Men having all their Cares bounded in this World, run always in the same Circle, and respect no other than their own Center, disdaining as it were an Interest in any superior Orb. This they esteem their highest Heaven, without which with *Aristotle* they cannot imagin either *Locum* or *Tempus* ; either Place to contain their Treasure, or Time to add to their Mortality. If by the permissive Indulgence of Almighty God, some sparkle of Grace do chance to present it self : yet this is but as Lightning no sooner seen but lost ; enough to shew it self, but too little to give Direction ; enough for their Curiosity to dispute, but too much for their Faith to apprehend : and therefore do they rather resolve to set up their Rest in this World, which they know, than hazard themselves on so dangerous a Discovery, in which they would shew themselves at least diffident, if not desperate. This seems to have been the Resolution of wicked *Cain*, who tho he  
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was excluded God's presence, sought out a Place in the Land of *Nod* to build a City, which might bear his Name and preserve his Family. Himself, as it were branded with the mark of Reprobation, he quickly submitted to Perdition with this desperate Assertion in his Mouth: *My Sin is greater than can be forgiven me.* His Posterity he committed rather to Chance or Policy than God's Protection; as if his own Care were sufficient to undermine the Divine Providence, or at least he had prov'd so good a Proficient in the School of Policy as to work his own desperate Fortunes to his Childrens Advantage. Among the many other Examples of this kind, I find none more remarkable than that of a certain Lawyer, whom *Bellarmin*, as he himself reports, in the time of his Sickness coming to visit, and urging to Prayer and Confession, reply'd that he could wish that Prayer were made for his Wife and Children, whose Welfare in this World he greatly tender'd; while himself as lost and desperate he gave over to Damnation. *Bellarmin's* Observation of this desperate Man, might methinks have open'd his Eyes to have seen that Mystery of Iniquity clos'd up in their Ba-

*bylonish Hierarchy.* How many thousand Souls, whom they ought to purchase to Christ, do they daily sell to Satan for their own Gain or Greatness, as if they all conspir'd in one to shipwrack their Hopes of another Life in Heaven, that they may bolster up a *Papal Monarchy* on Earth? Their Fire of *Purgatory* had long since been extinct, had it not maintain'd the *Pope's Kitchen*. Their Indulgences had long since grown stale and lain on their hands, had not the costly Marriages of the *Pope's Nieces*, or rather Daughters, set 'em out in a new Edition to make 'em vendible. The Idol of their pretended Supremacy had wanted Adoration, and *Peter's* imaginary Chair been broken and hurl'd to the Ground, had not Covetousness on the one side, Pomp and Ambition on the other, as two Supporters, labour'd to keep it upright. And little could *St. Paul* himself effect by his powerful Preaching among such *Athenians*, as never wanted a *Demetrius*, a Silver-smith, who lest his Shrines should stand upon his hands, will stoutly speak up for the Honour of *Diana's Temple*. Well may we call that a meer Politick Religion, or rather a masked Atheism, in which the pretended Service of



of God is set up as a Pillar to underprop an Antichristian Hierarchy ; and true Religion, which should command our best Observance, becomes the Slave and Servant of Ambition. In this, *Achitophel's* Design seems to fall short of their Industry : he sets his House in order, without any sense of Religion or Prejudice at God's Church ; whereas these Men use the Sword of the Church against Religion, constraining her at once both to inflict and smart at her own Wounds. *Achitophel* left the Commonwealth in a Combustion to set his own House in order ; whereas these Firebrands of State set their own Houses in order first, that they may the more easily disturb the good Temper of a settl'd Community. *Achitophel*, for ought we know, shut up all his treacherous Designs in his own Execution, leaving as Hereditary rather the Stain than the Guilt of his odious Treason to Posterity ; whereas these *Jesuitick* Factors, unwilling to cut off the Entail of their traitorous Inclinations either by Despair or Repentance, like a Brood of Vipers bequeath a Legacy of their venomous Quality to their Offspring ; in which, as out of a Cockatrice's Egg, is hatch'd, preserv'd and multiply'd

ply'd the accursed Spawn of Treachery and Sedition. Which last Clause leads our Discourse to a second Point, namely the Consideration of *Achitophel's* Death, in that he hang'd himself. In *Achitophel's* Death we may observe two special Points: First the Cause; Secondly the Manner. The Cause, as I have before noted, was Despair; and the Manner of his Death was as shameful and ignominious, as his Life and Actions. Now Despair is an Infirmity of human Temper, deserving rather Pity than Indignation. A Child it is, whom the Guilt of Sin begets on an evil Conscience; which no sooner beholds the Light, but it covets Darkness, as if it made no more use of Life, than to instruct a Man in the next way to Death. In this bottomless Pit of Despair, where no Passenger can cast Anchor, does *Achitophel* now find himself plung'd; and therefore, as one arrested by Death's immediate Serjeant, prepares for his next Appearance. Better die once, thinks he, than fear always; and shut up all Mischiefs in one Death, than spin out Life in many Mischiefs. Those lofty Scenes of State, in which *Achitophel* has hitherto either acted himself or prompted others, must

must not shut up in an *Evil Catastrophe* ; and who fitter to end, than he who began this stately Tragedy ? To live at another Man's Benevolence seems the smallest Privilege of a Subject ; to die at his own Command, the greatest Prerogative of a King. A base Executioner must not share so great a Glory, as to chop off a Head enrich'd with so much Policy ; nor must Justice seem to intreat any other Hands than his own in his stately Execution. Behold here the last Resolution of this matchless Politician, propos'd afterwards, it seems, as a Pattern to many high Spirits among the *Heathen* ; whose Judgments, infatuated by false Principles, misconstrue the Badg of Cowardice for the most honourable Seal of Courage : as if it were a Point of Valour to shake hands with Death, and faintly give themselves over to his Mercy, with whom as an Enemy they ought to combat. True Honour never fears to stare Death in the Face, but seldom courts it as a Friend : often as a Co-rival it struggles with it for Victory, but never gives up the Hilts or cries Quarter, till over-master'd by a greater and disproportionate strength, he finds 'em wrested from his Hands. So much



notwithstanding did this wicked Opinion of self-killing prevail among the antient *Romans*, that a speedy Dispatch of our selves in Case of Extremitys seem'd to challenge as much Honour, as with a *Christian* it deserves Shame. Thus do we find it not only recorded, but in a manner recommended by that Turn-coat *Lipsius* out of the Principles of his *Stoical Philosophy*, whose broken Rudiments he had, it seems, better conn'd than *Christianity*. But how far out of our voluntary Disposition we ought to entertain the stroke of Death, is not easy to determin without distinguishing. A Concurrence of our Wills we may interpret two ways, either for a *Passive Obedience*, indebted rather to Constraint than Choice, in which Nature submits her self to Justice or Necessity; or an *active Violence*, deriv'd for the most part from Fear or Rashness, in which *Reason* suffers her self to be captivated by boistrous Phrensy, arming the Strength of unwilling Nature against her own Bosom, and Life her sweet Companion. The former Concurrence of our Assent, or at least Submission to such Extremitys, we find warranted not only by Permission but Command, so far forth as the  
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the Justice of the Cause, conspiring with a regulated Conscience, imports Necessity. Those blessed *Martyrs* of the Church, whose glorious Wounds and Scars shine as so many Orient Pearls in their white Robes of Sanctity, are seal'd and mark'd out as Examples to Posterity. Those valiant Champions in defence of their Country and Religion, expos'd to the merciless Jaws of Death, or the bloody Phangs of uncertain Hazards in a *Christian Warfare*, what Age so envious, as that it will not crown with present Honour, and register to future Admiration? Nay even Malefactors themselves, in whom Justice often prevents Nature by an untimely Execution, may seem to cancel some part of their former Guilt in giving by their submissive Patience the strictness of the Law a due Satisfaction. And therefore without question the Sweetness of Life ought not to share so great a Moiety in our Affections, as to shut out our Obedience, when either Religion stands at stake, or our Country craves our Assistance, or Justice challenges her Prerogative. The other Exposure of Mens Lives to certain Death, where Necessity on either Hand threatens apparent Ruin without reprieval, I could

could charitably interpret like *Sampson's* Design, in razing the House at once to his own and the *Philistines* Destruction; or *Lucan's* and *Seneca's* Advice, in making choice of their Death by cutting their own Veins: did not God's Almighty Providence in our greatest Designs shew it self more pregnant than our Expectation, and command rather our Patience than Prevention. But for such untimely and unnatural Designs, in which the Hands are made instrumental Executioners to the Heart, as being prick'd on with the Horror of a guilty Conscience and distrust of God's Favours, neither *Christianity* ever gave any Precedent, nor *Stoical Philosophy* among all her strict Axioms a warranted Precept; this being an Action odious both to God and Man, which begins with Sin and ends with Shame. And this leads our Discourse from the immediate Cause of *Achitophel's* Death, namely his Despair, to the Manner and Quality of it, his shameful End. Shame is the sworn Servant of Sin, an odious but officious Hag, whom Life can never entertain without sorrow, nor Death easily shake off, till Memory forfeit her Records to Time, and Time to Oblivion. 'Tis  
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the Misery of Guilt, with Constraint to cherish in her Bosom the Child she hates, and bequeath such a fatal Issue to Posterity, whose Brows shall carry the true Stamp and Character of her own Deformity. And how great a Sovereignty soever Sin may seem to challenge in the Sphere of human Nature, which our first Parents by their Disobedience forfeited to her Jurisdiction, yet will it in the end find it self conquer'd; in that Sin living for the most part in Darkness, shuts up all her Malice with Death, while her untoward Babe shall survive to upbraid her Actions in the Light, and arraign her after Death at the Bar of Justice. Had *Achitophel* been as provident to prevent an ill Report after Death, as ambitious to preserve Reputation during Life, he had measur'd his Actions by the better End, or at least in the Event directed his worst Ends to better purpose, than lose at the last Cast what he had been so long a winning, or stain the Fame of his former Actions with so base an Execution. His eminent Gifts of Wisdom, howsoever sordid and wicked in themselves, as being directed rather to his own private Ends than to God's Glory or the  
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Good of the Publick, might notwithstanding out of a preconceiv'd Opinion of his Worth, have found in the common Voice a favourable Construction. Old Vices commonly find welcome under new Names, and nothing so witty as Sin to invent new Epithets to shut out Shame and entertain Plausibility. Luxury and Lechery, the Bane of Nature, may pass current under the Title of good Fellowship; ignorant Pride and supercilious Contempt may call themselves retir'd Gravity or stout Magnanimity; griping Covetousness and base Usury may find entertainment under the shew of thrifty Husbandry; Tyranny and Oppression shall be stil'd severe Justice and strict Government: at least from each of these, common Connivance would make a shift to extract somewhat, which might favour of Ingenuity, to cover Guilt from the Inquisition of Truth, and stop the harsh Mouth of Censure. And thus would it shew it self no less ingenious than *Aristotle* in his *Ethicks*, who in painting out to the Life his Idol μεγαλοψυχία, is observ'd to have stoln the chiefest marks of many notorious Vices to characterize one imaginary Vertue. No worse but  
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rather better Favour might *Achitophel's* Life seem to have deserv'd, especially among the common Rout of his Inferiors, who valuing the Worth of their Superiors, imagin'd 'em as eminent in Wisdom as they transcend in Greatness, e'en as if they conceiv'd 'em to be fashion'd in another Mould and wrought to another Nature ; and that little slips or scapes, which in ordinary Men we can interpret no other than the Effects of Infirmary, should in them be thought to proceed from premeditated Counsel and mature Deliberation, critically directed to some special End or other in the State. But admit that his sinful Projects had lain open to Discovery, yet favouring of a reaching Wit or season'd with Discretion, they might seem among vulgar Judgments rather the Fruits of politick Prevention than human Weakness. Our Intellectual Gifts we commonly value above our Moral Virtues ; and therefore think it a less Disparagement to be tax'd of Dishonesty than Indiscretion, as if we rather cover'd an Inheritance here among the Children of this World, than to have our Names enrol'd with the Children of Light. Thus far *Achitophel* had so carry'd his Matters,  
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as it may seem to speak his Wisdom, tho not his Honesty. Had *Absalom* thro his Advice advanc'd himself to the Throne of *Israel*, his notorious Treason had pass'd for profound Policy; nor could the World ever term that Act Treason, which is a King's or for a King's Promotion. If *Achitophel's* Project fell below expectation, it was *Absalom's* weakness to reject Advice, and not *Achitophel's* to suggest the best Counsel. But shift the Scene, and let the self-same Theatre, which just now found him plotting *Absalom's* Advancement, see him contriving the Means and Manner of his own Death; and you'll imagin him all this while but to have personated a wise Man, and now in the end to resume his proper Habit: much like a certain Beast in *Scythia* mention'd by *Pliny* in his Natural History, whom he reports to be able to change himself into all Variety of Shapes and Colours, and when returning to his own Form expresses the Resemblance of an Ass; a good Emblem of a wicked *Politician*, who sitting as it were at the Stern of State and holding the Helm in his Hands, must of necessity vary himself a thousand ways to obey all Winds and second all Tides.

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But Nature, which is the worst Dissembler of guilty Actions, will one time or other betray it self to Discovery ; or at least plain-dealing Death will strip him naked and lay him open to shame, leaving him as a Fool to Mens Contempt and God's Vengeance. Shame and Reproach, the most unwelcome Guests to *Achitophel* in his Life, are here invited as Friends to attend him to his Sepulcher ; and the Kind and Manner of his Death, tho most odious to God and Man, yet is thought the safest and sweetest in his foolish Choice. Among the many ways, by which every Man may make himself a Passage to Death, he must needs choose the worst : to die as a Dog on a Tree, and make himself guilty as well of his shameful Death, as the ignominious Motive to it. Death is the common Destiny of Mankind ; to fear or wish for it is the Mark of a Coward, and the Shame of a Man. To end our Course of Life in a warm Bed is Nature's Tribute, and the Crown of Silver Hairs ; to cancel Cares in the Field by the Hand of an Enemy, is the Chance of War and the Honour of a Souldier ; to die by the Sentence of Justice and the Stroke of the Executioner, is a Satisfaction  
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of the Law and some Expiation of Guilt : but to die out of Cowardice and Despair, to die by the Violence of our own Hands, to die without any way expiating the Guilt of Sin, by giving satisfaction to the Law or affording Nature any Right in Expectation ; and, which is more than all the rest, to quit the Vexations of this World to incur greater in the next, and to tread with unresolv'd Feet that unknown Path of Death, whose common Entrance shuts up in a doubtful End between celestial Joys and infernal Torments : What settl'd Judgment, I say, will not brand this with the odious Blot of extreme Folly, in comparison of which the greatest Vanity in the World should lose its Name and seem Discretion ? Here may we see the Weakness of human Wisdom tutor'd by Temptation, and directed by the common Enemy of Mankind, overmaster'd in this Instance ; and which in others seldom affords the Owner any greater Courtesy than Confusion, or their Names and Memory any other Trophy than a living Shame or a lying Sepulcher. Which directs our Enquiry to the third and last Action, preordain'd, as it seems, by himself in his Life, but executed by his Friends



Friends after his Death, namely his pompous Burial: for, as the sacred History tells us, *he was bury'd in the Sepulcher of his Fathers.*

Whether this last Action of *Achitopel* be rather to be ascrib'd to *Achitophel* himself as appointed by his last Will and Testament, or to his Children as their last Duty and Obligation to their dead Parent, we'll make no long dispute. It seems an Act of both, and in which either Party may share an Interest, as commanded by the one and executed by the other. With reference to the former, in *Achitophel's* Providence, seeking to preserve his Name and Memory in so slight a Trophy as a Stone or Statue, we may read the shallow Reach of many Politicians of our Age, ambitiously setting up their *garnish'd Sepulchers* in Churches and high Places as Idols of Admiration, to be worship'd by ignorant Spectators: which notwithstanding in a judicious Censure do only live for a Time to upbraid their Folly, and after a Time fall into Dust and Ashes, as the rotten Bones they shrow'd up in Oblivion. Envious Time, which has eaten out the Workmanship of so many famous Architects, and left not so much

as Stones or Ruins for Antiquity to boast of or Posterity to admire, might by the Mouth of History, its best Secretary, have discover'd the Weakness that of Confidence which grounds it self on such uncertainties. *Babel*, the greatest Ambition of human Industry, undertaken as it were by the joint Handicraft of Mankind, neither by Disparity of Religions nor Difference of Languages, as yet divided into Factions; in which as *Philo Judæus* notes, and the Text of *holy Scripture* not obscurely intimates, the chiefest Men of Rank and Estimation sought upon engraven Stones to preserve their Memory; what other Legacy in its Fall has it bequeath'd to our Observation than the want of Discovery, the Whetstone of diligent *Antiquarys* and Tortures of the most curious Inquisition? How much better is the content of a quiet Conscience, grounded on the Assurance of God's Promises of future Happiness, than such *Painted Sepulchers*, which present in a manner nothing else to Posterity, but their own Ruines and their Founders Weakness? However in the last Place from the officious Care of *Achitophel's* Children toward their deceas'd Father, may we learn the

\* Respect

Respect we owe to the Ashes of our dead Ancestors. The raising up of Monumental Statues to the Memory of others, we ought rather to interpret the Duty of Posterity, than the Ambition of our deceas'd Parents ; yet so, as that they ought rather to humble us with the Thought of Mortality than puff us up with Pride for our Parents Nobility. In a word, such Monuments, besides Shame and Infamy, if erected to ill Men, can express no other than the common Epitaph of Mankind : that *he liv'd and dy'd.* The greatest Tyrant in the World can command no more, the poorest Beggar can challenge to himself no less.

T H E E N D.





